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Thomas

THE

Davidson

TERMS

OF

MINISTERIAL and CHRISTIAN COMMUNION

Imposed on the

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

BY A

Prevailing Party in the General Assembly,

In OPPOSITION to the

GREAT BULK

BOTH OF

Office-Bearers and private Christians,

CONSIDERED,

In some CONFERENCES between two NEIGH-
BOURING MINISTERS.

Wherein, among other Things, the Reasons of the Dis-
sent from the Commission in *March 1752.* are fairly
examined.

With an APPENDIX relating to the new Pamphlet call'd,
A Just View of the CONSTITUTION of the Church of
Scotland, &c.

By Mr Walker of Danderhall

GLASGOW:

Printed in the Year, MDCCLIII.

T H E
P R E F A C E.



THE Author of the following Conference, who, in his Principles of Church Government, is known to his Friends to be equally zealous for Liberty of Conscience in disputable Cases, on the one Hand; and for Strictness of Discipline in Cases of undisputed Immorality, on the other Hand; has been urged by several Ministers of this Church for whom he has a great Regard, to write something on the first of these Subjects; whether from any apprehended Success in a former Attempt on the second, he will not presume to determine. Tho' no Answer has been ever yet returned to what was published on that Subject some Years ago; yet 'tis well known that an Overture of Assembly calculated for discouraging the Exercise of Discipline on the Breakers of God's Laws (as was then shewn) has been, Year after Year, transmitted to Presbyteries for their Approbation; and would, no doubt, have been passed into a standing Law, had such Approbation been obtained.

This Observation is extorted by what happened at the last Assembly. The Contrast that arises from the different Application of both the Lenity and Severity of the very same Persons will serve to illustrate both. It was by the prevailing of the same Influence, that a Sentence of summar Deposition was past for a modest Scruple about active Obedience to an Ordinance of Men; and that because of an apprehended Inconsistency with those divine Laws which, according to the best of my Information, (for I have not the Happiness of any personal Acquaintance with him) the deposed Brother has, from his younger Years, paid a strict and uniform Regard to. How grievous must it be to the true Disciples of Jesus Christ when *such* are the Characters that *his* Artillery is pointed against; while, at the same Time, Screens are devised for the Violaters of his Laws! If this Apprehension is founded upon a Mistake, one would think it had been worth while to have pointed it out.

Upon this Occasion, I cannot help saying, that the terrible Consequences of a like Conduct of Church Rulers in the Ages next to the truly primitive Times, appear to me in so frightful a View, that, if I could have any Influence with my Brethren,

I would beg of them in the most earnest Manner, to read, not any particular Book, but the History of the 4th and following Centuries, in any Book that does but represent the Facts. From them it will evidently appear that the astonishing Havock which the Papacy was at length enabled to make on every Thing that is truly valuable, and that a Christian ought to have any Concern for, was entirely owing to the Prevalency of such a Spirit in Church Government. An utter Neglect of the Authority of Christ in his known Laws, and a mighty Concern for their own in all the Impositions and Encroachments which they daily made upon Mens Consciences, so equally contributed to the gradual Revelation of the Man of Sin, that 'tis hard to say, Whether his glaring Appearance at last is more to be imputed to the one or the other.

It is not so much the Symptoms of the same Spirit beginning to actuate our Government, that convince me how little these Facts and Consequences are attended to, as the tameness and Indolence in opposing it, that may be observed in many who are far from being in the same Disposition themselves. That worldly Men (great Numbers of whom were tempted into Church Offices by that fatal Profusion of Riches and Honours which *Constantine* and his Successors poured upon the Clergy) will always act in the same Spirit, is not at all to be questioned. But that any truly good Men (of whom I hope there shall always be not a few in this Church, especially as we have so little Temptation to be otherwise) should abett such Measures, or be animated with no Zeal in opposing them, must surely proceed from their not attending to what always has been, and always will be, and in the Nature of Things cannot but be the necessary and unavoidable Consequences of them.

When once I had resolved to make an Attempt on opening the Eyes of Men of this Character; (and 'tis only for such that I write) the next Question was, what Method promised most success? I have long had a Prejudice against short and consequently superficial Writing on any Subject where pre-conceived Opinions must be combated, and Error confuted. There are few Men that have so loose a grip of their Opinions, as to let go their hold upon the gentlest Twitch. They must be wrestled with a while before they will part with any Thing which they have very closely embraced. If there were no Clouds of Passion or Prejudice hovering about our Understandings, the Rays of Truth would, at the very first Dawn of it, make their Way directly to our Hearts. But where is the Mind that lies thus open to Conviction? Besides, a short Performance cannot be supposed to

go to the bottom of the Matter. It can only touch, and that slightly, upon what is most general in the Subject: And therefore can give but a confused and superficial Knowledge of it; which, as *Placette* observes in the Preface to his *Morale abrégée*, has very little Advantage over a total and absolute Ignorance; for which Reason that judicious Writer has, many a Time, declared against short Abstracts and Summaries upon Subjects of any Importance, and consulting the Taste of slothful Readers for Brevity.

On the other Hand, I am far from being insensible, that in doing otherwise, I do not consult my own Reputation; that, in such transitory Works especially as this, there are few that have any relish for, few that have the Patience to bear with any Thing that is longer than what the common Idea of a Pamphlet suggests to their Minds. While any particular Subject is making a Noise, the generality of Mankind, who are but superficial Thinkers, and readily take a Side without much Examination, may have the Curiosity perhaps to glance over a short Discourse that does not threaten them with very intense Application in the perusal, which is over before their thoughts are so long fixed as is necessary to make an Impression that will be either deep or lasting: But are very loth to be at the Pains of searching into the bottom of a Subject, especially if it is like to afford them so disagreeable a Discovery as that of the Falsehood of their own pre-conceived Notions.

In this Dilemma, I applied for advice to the same Persons who had imposed the Task upon me. And they agreed that the Importance of the Subject required it to be handled at length. "It is far more difficult, says a Reverend Brother in a Letter to me upon this Subject, to conquer the Prejudices of Mankind, than to convince them when they give fair Attention.—*Hic labor, hoc opus*—to bring reasonable Creatures to listen to Reason when their Passions and Prejudices point another Way.——What a Proof this of our degenerate State!—This very Consideration however, shows the justness of your thought, that it may be of use to keep the Mind dwelling a while upon some momentous Things, till an Absurdity grows Palpable."

The chief Difficulty however still remained, that however the Subject might have, yet the Writer surely had no Pretensions to so long an Audience from the Publick. The force of this last Consideration obliged me to take a middle Course, namely to make an Experiment, in the first Place, upon a single Branch of the Subject, and to take my Measures afterward according as it suc-

succeeded, or not. This, I am sensible lays the Subject and me both under a very great Disadvantage, that of being judged without a full hearing. I know how little it would signify to bespeak the Suspension of the Reader's Judgment. But as no Bookseller, I dare say, would run the risk of a larger Performance from an Author of no Name, there is no Help for it. Necessity has no Law.

However, the Point that is discussed in this Conference is not only the Foundation of the whole Difference upon this Subject, and where the Abettors of the high Measures have always chosen to lay the stress of the Argument; but it is itself, abstracted from the Consequences which a wrong View of it has lately produced, a doctrinal Error of such Importance, and of such Influence on the Practice of Religion, as deserves a longer Confutation, if it were necessary. To maintain that any Circumstances whatever can excuse Men in doing what appears to them to be Sin, is a Doctrine that makes the whole of Religion (to borrow a Phrase from our Opponents) totter from the very Basis. It opens such a Gap in the Obligations of Morality, that nothing but stopping it can prevent the Inundation from overwhelming entirely even natural Religion itself. And I hope we may have leave to entertain at least as much concern for the Authority of God, which is hereby undermined, as others profess to have for the Authority of the Church, while it is coincident with their own.

But some to whom I communicated, at least, a part of what is now published, seemed to be apprehensive that this Error appears in so strong a Light, that every Body must needs renounce it at first View, and that it will be alledged to have been extremely idle to say so much against a Tenet which no Body maintains. As there is no *litera scripta manens* on the other Side, but the *Reasons of Dissent*, wherein mention is made of *withdrawing from the Society*, and this Hole is still left them to creep out at: 'tis thought that recourse will be had to it, and that it will now be pretended as if they never meant to plead for active Obedience when the Command appears to be sinful, but only for withdrawing, in that Case, from the Society.

For my part, I shall rejoice, if Matters do really turn out agreeable to this Apprehension. I shall cheerfully submit to the Imputation of having wasted my own and the Reader's Time to no Purpose, on condition that such pernicious Doctrine be no more heard in the Church of *Scotland*. But for my own Vindication I must beg leave to offer the following Considerations.

1. Whereas the only ground of my Brethren's Suspicion is, that it appears to them impossible that any Body can seriously

hold up their Face to the World and really maintain such a Doctrine, as, that a Man *ought* to do what he thinks a Sin; 'tis certain in Fact, which is a stubborn Thing, that such Doctrine has been maintained by others; witness the famous Aphorism of Pope *Innocent III.* equally pregnant, says *Bower* in his History of the Popes, with Nonsense and Blasphemy; *We, according to the Plenitude of our Power, have a Right to dispense with all Right:* Not to mention other Evidences of this that are produced in the following Sheets. Now it surely cannot be denied that what has actually happened in Fact, must needs be possible, at least. And I cannot say that my Opinion of every Bodies readiness to give up a manifest Error is such as gives me the great Hopes of never hearing more of a Doctrine that my Ears have rung with for a couple of Years. Are there not Men that hold up their Face to the World, and really maintain Transubstantiation?

2. What imposes even upon many a well-disposed Mind is their not attending to all that is really included in their Tenets. The general Terms that are made use of to express them serve not only to cover the Absurdity of them from others, but do actually contribute much more to cover it from themselves. In Order to disabuse them, it is necessary to lay open the whole. But then they must be set in a very broad and a very strong Light, before the wrong Side of them can be perceived by such Eyes as have got any mist before them, or are habitually turned only to the other Side.

3. Altho' our Opponents had never committed a Syllable of their reasonings on this Subject to the Press, by which they may be convicted, I do think it morally impossible, at least, for so recent a Testimony of our own Ears to be overcome all at once, even by the Contradiction of the whole Party, if they should agree in retracting their Doctrine, or denying that ever they had maintained it. Some of the reasonings that have been both publicly and privately used to this Purpose were recapitulated to the last Assembly, and published to the World *, if not by themselves yet by others who could not fail to be acquainted with them, and who cannot be supposed to have chosen the Place they did to affirm for a Fact what was notoriously known to be false. And indeed I have never heard, to this Day, the least whisper of a Complaint, as if any Injustice had been done in the Representation. For my own Part, I can safely say, that altho' every Word of the following Conference cannot be supposed to be taken exactly from the Life, yet a great Part of it is, more than affords suf-

* See Answers to the Reasons of Dissent. p. 12.

sufficient Ground for imputing the Sentiments and reasonings of *Andropodius* to many in this Church.

4. These Reasonings are so conformable to what we must have heard many a Time from Gentlemen that do not seem disposed to Risk either their Persons or their Estates for the Sake of any Doctrine of Religion, that 'tis not at all surprising to me to find most of those in the higher Ranks of Life falling in with such Doctrine, especially when they find it espoused by Clergymen themselves. Is it not generally looked upon by Men of this Sort, and by many others too, as a Sign of Weakness or Obstinacy to suffer at least for the less essential Parts of Religion? The Truth is, how little soever the Sentiments of *Andropodius* are capable of standing a severe Examination, how rarely soever they may have been openly avowed by Men whose Business it is to understand Religion, and teach it to others; yet really they are so far from being singular, that, for my own Part, notwithstanding the sanguine Expectation of some Friends, I make no question but the Sentiments of *Theodulus* will still be regarded as the peculiar Whims of visionary Religionists. How often have I heard our suffering Forefathers arraigned of Weakness, of unaccountable Stiffness and Obstinacy, by the very Reasonings of Mr. *Hobbs*, the very Reasonings of our Brethren recapitulated in pag. 12. of the Answers to the Reasons of Dissent, and that by Men of no irreligious Characters? And yet after all, 'tis certain that, (as Mr. *Baxter* expresses it with a beautiful Energy that must be felt by the Heart of every good Man) *those who are absolutely subjected to God, will obey none against him, cost what it will.*

5. In the single Paper which, as far as I know, has been yet ventured from the Press by the prevailing Side, viz. the Reasons of Dissent, in the composing of which they took six Weeks to weigh every Word, and in which, 'tis thought, there is a Hole still left them to creep out at, I have shown in some of the following Pages, that the Doctrine imputed to them is plainly and clearly maintained. And tho' this Hole may seem to be left open for a convenient Retreat in Case of Distress; yet as it could be easily stopt up, had we got that Length, by showing that an active withdrawing from the Society, or deserting our Station in it, is a Thing that we are not at Liberty to do in every Instance of Imposition; so 'tis certain that the Dissenters have themselves barr'd up their Way to it, by their absolute Pleadings for active Obedience to, at least some, sinful Commands. *Withdrawing from the Society*, as well as *seeking the Dissolution of it* is, by these Writers, evidently limited to extraordinary Cases, Cases of only GROSS Iniquity, and that of a particular Kind:
so

so that is a Refuge which, if it was a better Shelter than it is, they cannot fly to in the Case of *every* sinful Command.

Besides, however cautiously they have kept themselves to general and indefinite Terms, the Nature of the Cause and the Course of the Argument forces that very particular Sense upon their general Words which some are apprehensive they will yet renounce: for if they do not say that we ought to obey in some Cases where the Command is thought to be sinful, they say nothing at all to the Point in question. Language is so narrow and deficient, that the Occasion upon which Words are used very often ascertains the Sense of them better than a Dictionary: as Words in the *Chinese* Language are said to have their meaning determined by the Tone of the Voice in Pronunciation. If we may judge, by this Rule, what the indefinite Terms in the first Reason of Dissent signify, there cannot be any Doubt about their Meaning. Suppose a Master should order his Servant to plow a certain Piece of his Ground which the Servant thought extremely unfit for Tillage, and expressed some Backwardness in obeying the Command; if the Master, in that Case, should tell him, it was his Duty to obey Orders, even when he disapproved them himself, here, I dare say, no Body would take the Word *disapprove* in any Sense that is not abundantly Tenable. But suppose the Servant, after having, in many Instances, most punctually obeyed such Orders, notwithstanding his known Opinion of them, and modest Remonstrances against them, should be ordered to plow upon a Day set apart for publick Worship in the Congregation whereof he was a Member, and should then say to his Master: "Now, Sir, I must beg to be excused. This is really a Matter of Conscience with me, and interferes with what appears to me to be my Duty to God." If the Master should, upon *this* Occasion, still talk in the same strain, and tell him, "That his Conscience had nothing to do but obey Orders, that if there was any Sin in the affair, it could be imputed only to him that gave the Orders, not to him whose only Business it was to obey them, and that even when he disapproved them." In this Case, could there be any more doubt, that by *disapproving* here is meant counting it a Sin to do what was required?

But if there could be any doubt concerning the Meaning of the Dissenters, the Publisher of their Reasons has put the Matter out of Question, at least as to his own, and 'tis not improbable that he knew the Mind of the rest. He plainly declares it as his Opinion, in a Note at the bottom of p. 11. that we ought to obey even in such Cases as we judge to be disagreeable to the will of the Lord, or which is the same Thing, he censures it as

an Error to say, that Obedience is due in such Cases *only* as we judge *not* to be disagreeable to the Will of the Lord. To which I may add, that, whatever they may talk of withdrawing, as it is not this that will save them the Trouble and the odium of an unpopular Jobb; so it is evidently Obedience that the Dissenters are arguing for, and 'tis the Disobedience of the Presbytery of *Dunferline* which, in the Reasons of Dissent, and the Introduction to them, they so heavily load with the Reproach of being *criminal, Guilt, aggravated Guilt, adding to their Guilt, &c.* and Obedience is called their Duty, while, at the same Time, it is all along taken for granted that they looked upon the Thing required of them as disagreeable to the Will of the Lord, and the whole Reasonings proceed allennarly upon this Supposition, the necessity of a different Vjew of the Thing in order to Obedience being far from their Thoughts.

Indeed withdrawing from the Society is so slightly mentioned by the Dissenters, and seems to have so little of the stress of the Argument laid upon it, in comparison with Obedience, which is obviously the Point that is laboured, that I would not have been led by any Thing contained in their Reasons to suspect this to be the Refuge that is most likely to be fled to. But when I reflect that in verbal Disputes on this Subject, which I have sometimes born a part in, when Men have been forced to yeild the Point of active Obedience (and never till then) this was usually their last Refuge, I am sensible that the Argument would have been more compleat, could this Branch of it have been discust in the first Conference. However if the common Adage, *Verbum sapienti sat est* could be applied to this or any Controversy that is obstinately maintained, there are not wanting Hints upon this and the other Branches of the Subject that might save the Trouble of writing any more upon it. For my own part, I own, I am none of those that expect such an Improvement of a short Hint by any who have been keenly engaged on the opposite Side, as to supersede the Necessity of a larger Illustration.

As the terms not only of Ministerial but likewise of Christian Communion are mentioned in the Title Page, it may be proper to put the Reader in mind of the Steps that have been taken to straiten the one as well as the other, particularly by debarring from the Sacraments such of the People as have a scruple to apply for them to those Ministers who have been settled contrary to the Act of Assembly 1736. which has been enacted oftener then once by the same Influence whereby the trampling on the Act 1736 is like to be made a term of ministerial Communion. Some ob-

servation upon the one as well as the other of these high Stretches of ecclesiastical Authority may be necessary to set the whole scheme of High Church Tyranny in its proper Light.

I might have added to the Testimonies that are quoted in the following Pages, an Extract from a Letter of one of the most eminent Ministers among the present *English* Presbyterians to a Reverend Brother of my Acquaintance whereby it would appear how much astonished they are at the Proceedings of the last Assembly. But as I have ventured perhaps too far already in publishing what is contained in a private Letter without the Knowledge or Consent of the Writer, tho' one with whom I think myself at Liberty to use greater Freedom, I shall conclude this Preface with the following Lines, which are admitted into the publick Worship of the Dissenters in *England*.

Let *Caesar's* Due be ever paid
To *Caesar* and his Throne,
But Consciences and Souls were made
To be the Lord's alone.

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T H E C O N T E N T S.

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Sect. I. THEODULUS, ANDROPODIUS.

THEODULUS, tho' possessed of a Benefice in the *established* Church of Scotland, is one of that obstinate Sort of Presbyterians, that, if he had lived in *England*, would, in all probability, have been a *DISSENTER* there. He was early tinctured with the deepest Sentiments of Liberty of Conscience, and had, in his younger Years, imbibed so strong a Sense of the Protestant Principle of private Judgment, that, of all Things relating to Religion, he had the greatest Abhorrence of Violence and Persecution upon that Account. These Sentiments, that were so early planted, and had taken such deep Root in his Soul, were so far from decaying or withering, as he grew up in Years, that Age and Experience did, on the contrary, ripen them to a greater Perfection and Maturity. But as he observed, in the Course of those free Enquiries he indulged himself in, that a Reproach had been brought upon Freedom of Thought and Liberty of Conscience by these Principles having been adopted by *Libertines* in Practice, and abused to serve the Purposes of Irreligion and Profanity, he was no less zealous, on the one Hand, for a Strictness of Discipline in Matters of undisputed Immorality, than for a Tenderness of Indulgence in every Thing where Conscience was concerned.

It was not without some Concern that *Theodulus* found the generality, especially of his younger Brethren, like to take a very different Turn in both these Respects. And the Prospect which this gave him was the more disagreeable, upon his observing two Things in relation to this Matter, that appeared to him to be extremely obvious upon the very Face of the whole History of the Christian Church. The first was, an evident Connexion betwixt these Principles or Dispositions on each Side of both the Questions, *i. e.* that, on the one Hand, in proportion as Licentiousness in Morals, and a Slackness or Negligence of Discipline has, at any Time, been suffered to prevail, especially with Respect to the Clergy; so has a tyrannizing over Conscience, and a trampling upon its sacred Rights, increased in the same Degree; and on the other Hand, Liberty of Conscience, and Strictness of true Christian Discipline, have seldom

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failed to keep Pace with one another. The Laws of God and the Laws of Men appeared to him to have been in Fact, like the two Ends of a Ballance; as the one rose, the other fell: An extraordinary Concern for the one, being almost a certain Indication of some Sort at least of Indifference about the other. The second Observation is but a Consequence of the other, namely, that the Church, according as this or that Set of Principles influenced her Government, has been either in a pure or a corrupt State. And particularly whenever he reflected on that amazing Height of Corruption which overspread the Face of the Church and of the World before the Reformation, he could never think without a certain inward Horror upon that dreadful Pitch to which, at the same Time, Tyranny and Licentiousness, the cruellest Impositions upon Conscience, and the most abandoned Wickedness, seemed capable of being carried, even in those who pretended to be the Instructors of the World and the Directors of its religious Concerns.

There was one Effect however which *Theodulus's* Principles had upon his Temper and Behaviour towards his Brethren who were of a different Way of Thinking. Whatever were his Views of the real Tendency, and certain Consequences of any publick Measures; whatever was his Opinion of the Principles from whence they flowed; whatever bad Dispositions might have given the first Rise to them; and whatever Motives such Principles or Measures might be imputed to by the Searcher of Hearts, he was very careful to guard against making any Application of this Kind, to the Prejudice of personal Characters. He was so sensible of the different Lights in which the same Thing was capable of appearing, when viewed by different Persons, in different Situations; and had, in the Course of his Reading, met with so many Examples of this, and consequently of Men of the brightest Parts, of the most extensive Knowledge, and honestest Dispositions, being led, by some peculiar Train, into a full Persuasion of what appeared to him an evident Falshood, that he had settled his Mind in a Habit of imputing Difference in Sentiments to any Thing sooner than to bad Dispositions. And as he had observed it not to be uncommon, even for such as valued themselves upon their Moderation and Charity, to exercise it not according to the Law of Attraction that prevails in the solar System, which increases in Strength as the Distance decreases, but according to the Law of Gravitation which obtains between the Circumference and the Centre of the Earth, which is weakest at the Centre, and increases as the Distance increases; so that he who had no Scruple to live in a neighbourly Way with

with a Mahometan, would discover a peculiar Shyness to a fellow Christian; and while he had no doubt about the Salvation of an honest Heathen, could judge his Brother who differed from him about the Expediency of some publick Measures, to be a rank Hypocrite: This was an Inconsistency which *Theodulus* thought it particularly incumbent upon him to avoid. And therefore he endeavoured to keep up not only a neighbourly, but a friendly Correspondence, with such of his Brethren as were of the most opposite Sentiments to his in the Management of Church Government.

Among these was a Member of the last Assembly, who lived in his Neighbourhood, and equally cultivated the Friendship on his Part. His true Name, as well as that of his Friend, I have concealed under such as are intended to be expressive, not so much of their personal Characters, as of the different Sides they have taken in the Question now under Debate. *Andropodius* is a Man of an amiable Temper, where it is not spoiled by his high Principles, of an honest, and, I hope, pious Disposition, and possibly before he arrives at *Theodulus's* Time of Life, may enter more into his Views. But, being somewhat younger than his Neighbour, he found the Reins of Church Government, at his Ordination, in the Hands of his own Comrades, and consequently the Doctrines of Obedience and Submission in vogue, and those of Liberty and private Judgment, (as every Thing has its Turn) so quite out of Fashion, that no Body of his Years could so much as pronounce the Words without being ashamed at the hearing of a Sound that was grown so unpolite.

There are so many Books that agreeably entertain and amuse the Imagination, falling in young Peoples Way, that it is scarcely to be expected that even such of them as are Students have much Time to bestow in reading Controversies in Divinity, or great Volumes of Church History. And therefore it is not at all surprizing, that few of them are able to think otherwise than agreeable to the present reigning Prattle among their Companions. It is not every one that can resist a Torrent while 'tis overflowing the Banks, or stem a Tide before it begins to ebb. *Andropodius* on the contrary, like a true High Churchman, was so far from having the least Suspicion of his being liable to any Mistake, that it was thought a great Length when he was brought to yield, that possibly some might differ from him, who were neither arrant Knaves nor downright Fools. He was as confident of the Expediency of high Measures in Church Government, as if he had read the whole History of the Church, and found such to be the only successful Ones; and as positive in

his Assertions of unlimited and implicate Obedience, as if he had carefully studied the whole Controversy to the Bottom, and clearly discovered the Falshood of Reformation Principles.

However, as he had all the other Appearances of being a good-natured Man, *Theodulus* would never allow himself to suspect that *Andropodius* was capable of doing any Thing that was really cruel, or that himself and his numerous Family was in Danger of being reduced to absolute Want and Beggary by a Vote of his Friend and Neighbour, for no other Reason but the Difference of their Opinions in the Management of Church Affairs. Hitherto when that Topick happened to be thrown up in Conversation, it was not so much reasoned between them in a serious Manner, as joked upon with some little pleasant Raillery on both Sides. When *Andropodius*, seemed (as the Matter was then apprehended) disposed to amuse any of his Neighbours with some of his high Flights, *Theodulus* knowing how apt young People are to make others stare at something new and extraordinary, and how much they are gratified by a little Indulgence in this, chose sometimes to ballance his Extravagancies on the one Hand, by as extraordinary Flights on the other, keeping up good Humour, and being extremely unwilling to understand the High Church Principles, vented by his Friend, in any other Sense than as intended to be laughed at. But when by *Andropodius*'s voting at the last Assembly for the Deposition of Mr. *Gillespie*, it was no longer in any ones Power to doubt of his being in earnest, and it thereby appeared there was no length to which Party Violence might not drive those who were sensible of their Strength, by having usually a Majority in the Assembly, *Theodulus* began to regard the growing Influence of high Church Doctrines in a more serious Light. Besides the publick as well as personal Concern he had in the Matter, a particular Regard he had for so agreeable a Neighbour in all other Respects, made him at length resolve to try what Effect a serious Reasoning might have upon *Andropodius*.

With this View, he took the first Opportunity of Leisure to pay him a Visit, when after some Strokes of Raillery on both Sides as usual, the Conversation grew at Length more serious in the following Manner.

§ 2. THEOD. *Andropodius*, I am glad to see you returned to a cooler Climate again. For *Edinburgh* seems to me, instead of being near the 56th, as it appears to the Mathematicians, to be got near the 42d Degree of Latitude.

ANDROP. To the Latitude of *Rome* you mean. And pray who would not exchange the Climate of *Scotland* for that of *Italy*?

Italy? But let me tell you *Theodulus*, it would be your Wisdom to talk a little more softly, if you have any regard for your good Spouse and her pretty Children, whom I wish better to than you seem to do yourself. For now that our Hand is in, I assure you, I would rather see you here, than at the Bar of the Assembly. I do not think we have yet got the length of *Rome*; but if you will have us in *Italy*, we have indeed passed the Rubicon, and what we have so bravely begun, we are resolved to go thro' with: So that such sturdy Spirits as yours must either bend or be broken. And if you have any Curiosity to try the Experiment, how you, who find so much ado to bring up a young Family upon several hundred Merks, could do it upon nothing at all, I believe it would not be very difficult to find an Opportunity.

TH. Why truly I am of Opinion that there is not so much difference as you may be apt to imagine. I was much pleased with an Answer I have heard imputed to Mr. *Glass* who was deposed some Years ago, and who, 'tis said, replied to one that was accusing him of folly for losing his Stipend upon a Point of Conscience: "If I cannot get as much Money as to purchase a Coat of *English* Cloath, I hope I'll be able to buy one of course Grey. If I cannot get a Hat, I can wear a Bonnet." And without all Question, a good Conscience under one of these Coverings is infinitely preferable to a grumbling one under the other. As for having nothing at all, I thank God, that is what I have no apprehension of, while he is pleased to preserve my Health, unless the civil Government should catch the Spirit of the Ecclesiastical. And there is no appearance of this at present, while an honourable Gentleman bears so much sway both in the Ministry and in Parliament, who, so lately gave it as his Opinion, that if even Mr. *Murray* had alledged Conscience in the Case of his kneeling at the Bar of the House of Commons, the Excuse ought to have been admitted; and while we have a Family on the Throne that has shewn on all Occasions how sensible they are that they hold the Crown by the Tenure of Liberty. As for my Children, they will very soon be able to Shift for themselves. If I want my Stipend, I will not pretend to board them at Schools, or Colleges. And for their Parts, I am sure, it will be happier for them to be bred Mechanicks than to follow their Fathers Business in a Church where no Regard is to be paid to the sincere Scruples of an honest Conscience. And let me tell you seriously, *Andropodius*, what I am sure you cannot fail to be as much convinced of as I am, when you are disposed to be serious, that a higher or lower Station in the World, a great-

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er or lesser Enjoyment of the Conveniences and Accommodations of this low transitory Life ; Nay, the having or wanting even the Necessaries of it, if ever it should come to that, becomes a Matter of great Indifference in Comparison, to one that habituates himself to Views of Eternity. And till once we acquire a certain Degree of Indifference to them, *i. e.* value them infinitely under the favour of the supreme Being, and the Approbation of our own Conscience, it will be impossible to defend our Virtue against the Temptations of the World. Nay, 'tis in this very Thing that the real Difference between a true Disciple of Christ and a worldly Person consists.

AN. I see the last Assembly has wrought a change upon your Temper. I have known you abler to bear this Subject, and talk of it with as much chearfulness and gait as I could do. As long as we only threatened, you laughed at us. But now that we have begun actually to execute our Threatenings, and are determined no longer to dally with you, you seem, I think, to be a little Crest-fallen.

TH. Take care however that you do not mistake the Matter. The last Assembly has indeed made me less chearful ; but it has at the same Time made me likewise less complying. Conscience is never so stubborn, as when 'tis made thoroughly serious. If ever a Victory is obtained over an honest one, it must be when it is off its Guard. The more openly she is attacked, and the louder that War is declared against her sacred Rights, so much the more careful is she to provide for her Defence. What other effect can be expected from the shaking the Terrors of this World over our Heads, but to put us upon weighing them against the Consequences of acting upon such Motives ? And what else can be the result of deliberately weighing them in such a Ballance, but a more settled and sedate Contempt of them ? For I hope you'll allow that their whole Strength lies in our want of thinking.

AN. You seem really to be in a fair Way of having your constancy put to the Tryal. I doubt not but if you go on at this rate, we shall have the old Scene acted over again, of the weakest of the primitive Christians, who, in their foolish Zeal, used to run to the bloody Tribunals of the Heathen Judges, crying, *Sum Christianus*. Tell me seriously now, my dear *Theodulus*, have you not in some of your Enthusiastical Reveries, dreamed yourself so much in love with a grey Coat, and a black Bonnet, (for I fancy the Zeal of your *Whiggery* will give you a Prejudice at a blue one) that it will be no small Disappointment to you to miss the honour of appearing in that Dress ? And will you forgive me, if I should carry my Opposition to you so far as to thwart

thwart this ambitious Project of yours, and keep you, if I can, upon the same Level with myself? But after all, let me assure you, in the mean Time, that none of these idle Rants will hinder us from pursuing the Measures we have begun, and are resolved to go through with. We will either be obeyed without reserve, or we shall soon make a clean House.

TH. Clean may it be, with all my Heart! and every thing that's really dirty swept out of it! But if a tender Conscience is the Nuisance, Prepare, my Friend, I advise you, to follow us at length. For every Man that has a Conscience, as I never doubted but you have, tho' it does not happen yet to be touched, may chance sooner or later to meet with something that he will stick at. And when none are left behind but such as will stick at nothing, I wish them all the Joy that so empty rather than clean a House is capable of. But you have passed the Rubicon, you say, and cannot retreat. That is, if I understand you right, you have begun a Civil War; and I wish it may not be in too many Respects like that of *Caesar* which you allude to. He began it out of an immoderate Lust of absolute and unbounded Domination. He had the servile and hardy Legions on his side; but the Bulk of his Countrymen were against him, and particularly all those that breathed any Thing of the Spirit of Liberty. He succeeded; but it was in destroying the Liberties of his Country, those Liberties that had raised that People to the greatest Pitch of Power and Grandeur that ever the World saw, and had produced a Set of great Men that can only be rivalled by those who were bred in the free States of *Greece*. The formality of Elections was suffered to continue; but that brave People who had formerly raised the *Scipios*, the *Catos*, the *Ciceros*, &c. to the highest Posts in the Government, were then obliged to give their Votes for the most abandoned Prostitutes, and the lowest and most scandalous Instruments of the Tyrants Wickedness, till at length they had the Mortification to see such great Men succeeded by a Horse. And well had it been for them, if they had never had a worse Consul.

AN. I hope you do not forbode any Consequences of this Nature from the Conduct of the last Assembly. I assure you, we were so far from intending to overthrow the Constitution, that it was a deep concern for supporting it, that suggested the Measures we took. And these Measures appear to me not only so proper and seasonable, but indeed so indispensibly necessary, that methinks if you had a Drop of Presbyterian Blood in you, you should sing *Io Paean* in Triumph for the Victory obtained over the Enemies of our Constitution. Had not the Presbyteries of

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Lithgow and *Dunfermline* each a Mine ready to spring upon it? The first, having escaped without much Hurt being done on either Side, encouraged the other to a second Attempt. And if they had not been blown up in their own Works, the Constitution must have gone to Pieces. The last Assembly came just in Time to its Relief. And sure I am, if the *Germans* were obliged to the King of *Poland* for marching to their Assistance in the Nick of Time, raising the Siege of *Vienna*, and saving the Empire near 70 Years ago; the Church of *Scotland* has no less Reason to thank the last Assembly, who, seeing her tottering on the very Brink of Ruin, did by their steady and intrepid Conduct, defeat the Conspiracy that was formed against her, made the audacious Attempt recoil upon its Authors, infused new Life and Vigour into the languishing Constitution, supported the despised Authority of her supreme Judicatory, chastised her disobedient and refractory Sons, and overwhelmed her Enemies with Disappointment and Confusion.

TH. A mighty Exploit truly, to erect such Trophies upon! The depriving a good Man of his living, and an innocent Parish of their useful, and beloved Pastor! But what would you think, *Andropodius*, if you and I should so far agree upon this Subject for once, as to join in thanking God at least for what was done by the last Assembly? How small a share so ever of my Gratitude, I may still imagine, belongs to you.

AN. I make no Question but you'll come to that at last, when once you are able to lay aside your Prejudices and to reflect upon the Matter with Coolness and Deliberation. But I would be glad to hear how this surprising Revolution has been brought about so suddenly.

TH. The Revolution, possibly, will not appear so surprising, when you have understood the whole of it. Tho' perhaps it will not lessen your surprise to tell you, that in my Apprehension, you have been so far from obtaining the very Ends you mention, that you have defeated your own Design.

AN. If it continues to open thus upon me, I confess you will surprise me indeed. For let me tell you, *Theodulus*, however I have sometimes alledged upon you by Way of Argument or raillery (and I believe you took it in no other sense) that you had renounced your Presbyterian Principles, I own, I never expected to hear you so openly profess that the defeating of a Design for the Prosperity of the Church of *Scotland* is a Matter of thankfulness and Joy to you.

TH. The Truth is *Andropodius*, we are, upon this Occasion, as upon many others, involved in Confusion by ambiguous Words,

Words, to which, I fancy, you and I affix very different Ideas. And till once this Confusion be unravelled, we are all the while talking in the dark. When I speak of the Prosperity of the Church of *Scotland*, I do not mean this or that set of Men getting more of their Wills, or being in a fair Way of lording it over their Brethren. The Idea that I would chuse to convey by these Sounds is, the real Increase of true Religion in this Part of Christ's Church: 'Tis the Success of the Petition in the Lord's Prayer, where we beg, that not Mans, but God's Will may be done among us; 'tis a visible Growth both of the true Knowledge, and the sincere Practice of Christianity; and what is most sensibly perceived by us, such a State of Things as has an evident Tendency to promote these Purposes, *viz.* Ministers seeming to love the People, and the People them; a deep concern as well as Capacity on the one Hand, to be useful; a tender and affectionate Regard for the spiritual Interests of those Souls whose Salvation is the End we ought to have in View in all our publick, as well as more private Actings: And on the other Hand, a hearty and universal Acceptance of our Labours, an esteeming us very highly in love for our Work's sake, a chearful Attendance upon our sacred Ministrations, with Appearances of Pleasure in them and Edification by them. This, my dear Friend, is what I would have meant, if I had been speaking of the Prosperity of the Church; this I take to be a flourishing State of it; whatever become of its temporal Power in bestowing, or withdrawing the Possession of Stipends, Gleibs or Manſes; and this is an End, the defeating or disappointing of which, you may easily be assured, would give me no Manner of Joy. But you'll forgive me in supposing, that these and such like Ideas were far from being in your Mind, when you were celebrating the Triumphs of the last Assembly. And if by your glorious Exploits you mean that you had more Power than formerly to trample upon and oppress your Brethren, and actually were smiting your fellow Servants, whose Labours were acceptable to our common Master; if you mean that you have got that hopeful Project considerably advanced of alienating the Stipends of this Church from being of any spiritual Use to the People for whose sakes they were originally designed, and converting them into *fine Cure* Annuities, and have actually put the Stipend of *Carnock* in a fair Way of being thus disposed; if you mean that you have subdued the superior Authority that God has been hitherto acknowledged to have over all his Creatures, and raised your own above it; if you mean that you have established for the future an easy and certain Method, never again to be disput-

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ed, of accomplishing forced Settlements of Ministers over the Bellies of the most reluctant Parishes, whereby that Aversion and Alienation of Affections between Pastors and People that has been long on the growing Hand, and that so effectually hinders their Edification will be farther strengthened and increased; finally, if you mean that you have put Things in a Way whereby all your Brethren shall be reduced to the necessity, I cannot say of being equally acceptable, but of being equally unacceptable to the People, and equally incapable of doing any good amongst them, or that you have put Things in a Way of driving out of the Society all those who have still some Degree of concern for their own Usefulness; if these are the mighty Things you have done for this Church, I must beg your Pardon, Sir, if I can take no share in the Joy at this sort of Church Prosperity, and if I hope that you have really defeated your own Project, and taken the very Measures that have the direst Tendency to render it abortive.

AN. You go on at a strange Rate, *Theodulus*, with your arbitrary Suppositions. For my Part I know no Reason you have to imagine either that these were our Views; or if they were, that we have done any Thing to disappoint them.

TH. I do not imagine indeed that you would make use of the same Words that I have done, in describing your boasted Exploits, or that you View them in the same Light that I do. But our changing the Names of Things does not change their Natures. Things continue to be what they are, not only whatever Words we apply to them, but whatever Side of them we confine our Views to. And if you'll but have the Patience to go all round (if I may speak so) what you have been doing, and view it on every Side, perhaps you may find some ground to suspect not only that I have given a just Account of your Aims, but also that you have been, with your own Hands, demolishing the very Structure you was endeavouring to rear up; that the Church in your Sense of the Word, I mean your own Power and Projects, has not been so great a Gainer, and that the Church in my Sense of the Word, is really more obliged to you, than you perhaps are ready to imagine. Not that I suppose you intended your Favours, where Providence may direct them to light. In a Word I hope the Church is obliged to you in the same Manner that the Nation was obliged to the late insatuated King *James*, for the extraordinary Violence of his Proceedings, and the Rapidity of his Career; and particularly, for sending the seven Bishops to the Tower, in the very same Cause, and for the same precise Reason, that you deposed Mr *Gillespie*, viz.
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for not violating the Dictates of their own Consciences, and refusing to have an active Hand in Measures that appeared to them ruinous and destructive.

There was such a Degree of Inattention among us to the Consequences of the present Measures, and, at the same Time, such a Degree of Slothfulness, even where they were perceived, that I verily believe, had you driven a little more softly, you would have come sooner to your Journeys End. Had you contented yourselves for a while with finding us censurable and rebuking us, your high Words and big Threatenings might have kept us in some awe of you, till we had been so far incured to Correction, that a Suspension would not have surpris'd us, and in this easy Gradation, it would not have been a very unnatural Transition, to have proceeded at last to depose such as continued after all to be disobedient or refractory. In the mean Time the Number of such would have still been lessening, and their Churches filling with more pliable Successors, almost all the young Men are of your Way of thinking, being led into it by a Train of Circumstances easily enough accounted for, and being naturally hot blooded, when provoked either in their own Cause or that of their Comrades. And thus if you could have had the Patience to accomplish so violent a change by Degrees, I know not but you might have lived to see the Bulk of the People of Scotland who have any use for Churches driven out of them to such a Degree, that you would have had nothing to do for your Stipends if it were not to meet in the Assembly once a Year, and join with the few Quality and Gentry who think it worth their while to have a share in judging of the Disposal of 60 or 70,000 l. a Year.

But so large and hasty a Stride from a gentle Reprimand to a summar Deposition, for a Crime which was so lately declared to have *always been, and still to be the Principle of this Church*, and which we were so pathetically exhorted to commit, *as we regard the Glory of God and Edification of the Body of Christ*, must needs, I should think, have an Effect in awakening the most inattentive and slothful amongst us, in spiring the most timid, and alarming all those who have the Interests of practical Religion seriously at Heart, so as at least we may have one Struggle more for our expiring Liberties, which may, perhaps, set the Crisis at some greater Distance. I am sure there is yet Strength enough in this Church to ward off the Blow, if it were but exerted: And a few more desolate Parishes thro' the Land

(the sooner the better) I'm confident, will rouse it at last. You know the old Saying, That the Blood of the Martyrs is the Seed of the Church. The more 'tis oppressed, the more it grows. If I can judge of others by myself, the next Assembly cannot be of the same Complexion with the last. You know, *Andropodius*, that you had my Vote for being a Member of the last Assembly. But do you think I would vote for you again, or for any that would vote for deposing myself, for a Crime which he knows I think myself obliged to commit, to be a Member of the next Assembly?

AN. I believe, *Theodulus*, we had better call another Cause. You seem to be growing warm: And if you continue in this Temper, it is not likely that either you will convince me, or I you. It can serve no good Purpose, and particularly can never make People sensible of an Error, to impute to them Motives or Designs which they are conscious to themselves are far from their Thoughts. If you had the Calmness to hear me explain the Reasons of our Conduct, it might be worth the while to continue our Conversation upon this Subject. I own 'tis a Matter of Importance to the Church, for us to form a right Judgment what are the properest Measures to be taken upon this Occasion. I do not decline a sober Reasoning, whereby either you may be made sensible of the unavoidable Necessity we are brought under of exercising a little Severity, or I may be undeceived as to the Impression I have that we are. But whether we convince one another or not, let us observe the Rules of Civility, and beware of increasing the Difference that is like to grow between us by downright Scolding.

TH. Would to God, *Andropodius*, that Matters had not been carried much farther than Scolding. However, I thankfully accept your Rebuke, my good Friend, and confess my own Folly in pretending to dive into the Designs of Providence, which are hid in the secret Counsels of God; but, at the same Time, must beg leave to put you in Mind, that when you spoke of the Conspiracy against our tottering Constitution, you did not then seem to be so mindful of this Sobriety. The high Words that are thrown out on either Side (for it must be owned that in all Cases of this Sort, *Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra*) must, and I hope, usually are taken with considerable Grains of Allowance. As I dare say you do not suspect me of *intending* any Hurt to our Constitution; so, I assure you, I do not suspect you to be a real Enemy of serious Religion. And whatever I may think or say of your Measures, if I heard any Body imputing bad In-

tentions to you personally, you would have no where a more zealous Defender than myself. If there are any among the original Authors of the high Measures, who, regretting that our Enemies in the Tory Parliament 1712, did not carry their Resentment against us farther, and oblige us to admit every Presentee under Pain of Deposition, do really prefer the supplying of that Defect, to the Edification of the Body of Christ, and the most important Interests of practical Religion, and without any Regard to the Hurt that may be done in these Respects, are absolutely determined, at any Rate, to have this Sanction now added to the Patronage-Act, by the Churches own Authority, I say, if there are any such, which God only knows, they are Persons whom I would, by no Means, pretend to reason with, as I know of no Topicks from whence I could fetch an Argument that could make an Impression on them. This I am sure of, (and 'tis the Encouragement I have to reason the Matter with you) that many, to my own Knowledge, are engaged in the high Measures, who, whatever Keenness they have shewn to enforce the Law of Patronage by a severer Sanction than our Enemies themselves thought proper to venture upon; yet do prefer the promoting of true Religion to every Thing else; and therefore would not be for the first, if they saw it inconsistent with the second. As I have always taken you for one of these, and consequently one who has a sure Handle to be taken by; let us, I beseech you reason the Matter calmly and deliberately. And, I hope, it will not be reckoned inconsistent with this Proposition, if I should give you my Reasons why I think some Arguments which are commonly used on your Side of the Question, (in Case you should happen to repeat them) are not thoroughly honest, but such as yourselves must needs be conscious, on the slightest Reflections, that there is really nothing in them, however you have been led one after another to insist upon them. And, as I am now settling Articles with you, I must likewise insist on the known Privilege that a losing Gamester has been always indulged in to complain.

AN. Your first Condition must needs be referred to Particulars, as 'tis impossible to say any Thing to it, unless I understood more of the Meaning of it. I am sure, it is not my Intention to advance any Argument but what I think there is some Weight in. As for the other, if you would be sober in the Exercise of your Privilege, and keep within the Bounds of Decency, perhaps, I shall not grudge it much. You know 'tis what I have sometimes pled with yourself in Behalf of your own Children, when you have been restraining their Complaints at the Correc-

rection you have thought fit to administer to them. And, for my Part, I frankly own to you, that I am no Admirer of the Politicks of our Managers when they are not liberal in their Indulgence this Way to the Minority, and refuse to admit their Protestations, and what they think necessary for their own Exoneration, as they call it. I take the Word indeed to be very expressive of the Thing. For they seem to be so oppressed with the Burden, that they find no rest till they have laid it off somewhere. And I know no Place where it can ly safer, and do less Hurt, than in our Records. When ill Blood has been raised into a Fermentation, I take it to be the wisest Course to allow some Evacuation of it by the most natural Issue. For when 'tis forcibly pent in, 'tis apt to disorder the whole Body, and ten to one, but it will afterwards break out in more dangerous Symptoms.

§ 3. And now I think Preliminaries are so far settled, that the Congress may be opened when you please, if once we had agreed upon the Method in which we are to proceed. I believe there are chiefly two Points wherein we differ, namely, the Part that has been acted by some Presbyteries and particular Ministers, who have refused Obedience to the supreme Court of Judicature among us; and the Measures which the supreme Court has been thereby obliged to take, in rebuking, suspending, and even deposing one of them from his Office. The first is what I suppose you undertake to defend, as well as to impugn the other. And, on the contrary, it appears to me as clear as the Sun, in the first Place, that 'tis incumbent upon all Inferior Judicatories and Individuals, in any Society, either to submit to the last Decision that a Cause can have, when it has been appealed till it can be carried no farther, or else to leave such Society as they cannot submit to. And, in the second Place, that if they obstinately refuse to do either the one or the other, the Society is brought to this Dilemma, either to thrust them out, or give up all Pretence to Order and Government.

TH. I have no Objection against your general Plan. Only I think the first Branch of it may bear a Subdivision, as it may be necessary for the Sake of more Distinctness, to consider, *first*, What are the Measures of Submission to Superiors in general; Or, Whether their Commands oblige to an unlimited Obedience. *Secondly*, Whether all those who refuse Obedience, in any one Instance, ought to throw up their Place in the Society. And, *Thirdly*, What Grounds there are for scrupling Obedience, in the particular Case of the violent Intrusions that have been, or may be imposed upon Ministers in this Church; that we may be

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sensible how far the general Argument is applicable to our present Situation.

AN. Well then to begin with the first: Will you really pretend to say, that there can be any such Thing as Government or Order in Society, where every Individual is impowered to reverse a Decision that has gone through all the Forms of that Society that can give it any Weight? The very Design, you know, of constituting Government among Men, is to put an End to Controversies that may arise between Individuals. Men, in a private Capacity, will have Differences with one another to the End of the World. For this Reason there must be a Power lodged somewhere, to decide such Questions as cannot otherwise be brought to an amicable Conclusion: This is the Design of Government. Perhaps the Decision of the lowest Court is thought iniquitous; and therefore Liberty is allowed to seek Redress from a higher. But unless such Questions are to remain always in a State of Suspense, there must be a highest beyond which the Affair cannot be carried. And tho' it is possible that the last Decision may really be as iniquitous as the first; yet, as it cannot be rescinded till the Day of Judgment, it must be considered among Men as infallible, and have the same Effects as if it were. For pray, do but consider what the Consequence would be of denying this: No less than the Subversion of Government altogether, and reducing us to a State of Anarchy and Confusion, where nothing but the strongest Arm can prevail. To say that the last Decision is not to be submitted to, is the same Thing with saying, it is not the last Decision, or that there can be no Decision at all, *i. e.* that every Man has a Right to do what seemeth good in his own Eyes.

TH. I wish you may be satisfied that so laboured an Argument has all the Regard that is due paid to it, if I should give you so short an Answer as this plain Distinction. There are two Kinds of Submission; *viz.* active, and passive. If you mean the last, I agree to the whole, and only ask you, whom you are arguing against? If you mean active Submission, or Obedience, which is the only Subject of our Dispute, I deny that 'tis necessary to the Subsistence of Government.

AN. I was half guessing now, *Theodulus*, knowing your usual Trick; that you would avoid the Force of a plain unanswerable Argument, by having recourse to some metaphysical Subtlety. You never want a Distinction to bring you off at a Pinch. I lay my Account some Time or other with, *categorematische nego, whittledgeorastice affirmo.*

TH. Do not imagine, my dear *Andropodius*, that on so important

portant and serious a Subject, I have now any Inclination to divert either you or myself with so childish a thing as a trial of Skill. But Experience has convinced me, that the unavoidable Imperfection of Words is really a Snare to those who are excessively fond of a particular Way of Thinking. Very different Ideas are frequently involved under the same Words, which gives a sophistical Argument a specious Appearance at first View. Advantage is taken of this by designing Men to impose upon others. And the generality of the World are either so slothful, that they will not be at the Pains of as much thinking as is necessary to unravel the Matter; or, if the Sophism should happen to be on the same side of a Question which they have espoused, they are so unwilling to lose the Benefit of it, that they cry out of Subtlety and Metaphysics, if one should go about to distinguish the different Ideas that are involved in the same Sounds. And thus slothful and partial Affection conspire in supporting Error, and opposing the only Means that can undeceive us. But, pray tell me, if you and I should happen to find any Thing of Value upon the high Way, for the Possession of which we should be so unhappy as to contend, each alledging he saw it first, would it not be an unfortunate Situation, if there was no other Way of determining this Controversy, but by our fighting, and perhaps murdering one another?

AN. No doubt it would.

TH. Suppose now we should agree to refer the Decision to a third Person, and that the Arbitrator, perhaps, without any good Reason, at least in my Apprehension, should award the sole Possession of the whole disputed Subject to you. If in that Case, tho' I should not actually carry it home to your House, I should yet so far acquiesce in the Decision, as to abandon my Claim, leave you in Possession of that which we contended about, and never entertain so much as a Thought of disturbing you in the enjoyment of it, would not the Difference be ended? And would there not be an evident Advantage in such a Method of preventing bloody Quarrels and Disorders beyond the Way of deciding every Difference by the strongest Arm?

AN. And what if the Arbitrator should order you to carry it home to my House. Is not the Peace of human Society worth your submitting to that too!

TH. Perhaps, I would have as little Scruple about a Piece of Drudgery of that Sort as you. The only Intention of my present Argument is, to show you, that passive Obedience or Submission is abundantly sufficient for the Ends of Government, and that you have some Reason at least to lower the high Stile that's com-

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commonly used on your Side of the Question, as if our Doctrine was absolutely inconsistent with the least Order in human Society, and would run us into the most lawless Anarchy and Confusion. As for active Obedience, I think it proper to let you know distinctly, how far we carry it, and where it is precisely that we stop. For huddling up Things in Confusion, is favourable for nothing but Error. And I find the Arguers on your Side of the Question would gladly have it taken for granted that we deny the Obligation of all Sort of Submission to Authority, as it is only that Supposition which gives any Colour to the triumphant Air so frequently affected among you. And 'tis for this Reason, I dare say, tho' possibly unperceived by yourselves, I mean for fear of a clear and distinct stating of the Question, that you chuse rather to talk than write upon the Subject, however provoked. You have been told upon every Occasion that 'tis only active Obedience we object to: Yet still you argue as if we were against passive Obedience too. I doubt not but you would fain have it to pass unheeded, as if we did equally object against all Sorts of active Obedience likewise. And therefore you must bear with a little more of my Metaphysics, if you please to call every Distinction I am obliged to make by that Name.

All that can be the Subject of the Commands of a Creature, must be either such Things as are in themselves morally good, or commanded by God, whether this Command appears from the Light of Nature, or Revelation, expressly or by Consequence; or such Things as are in themselves indifferent, *i. e.* neither commanded nor forbidden by God; or such Things as are in themselves morally evil, *i. e.* forbidden by God. Of all these 'tis only with Respect to the last that we beg for any Excuse. And even here there is yet a farther Distinction to be made; for we do not refuse Obedience even to all unjust Laws. A learned Writer* upon this Subject observes, that there are two Sorts of unjust Things that may be imposed by Superiors: some Things that are unjust to do, as Lying, Perjury, Blasphemy, &c. others that are only unjust to suffer, for Example, Imprisonment for the Defence of the Truth. It is unjust to commit a Man to Prison for owning the Truth: But this Injustice is only in the Magistrate, not in the Subject. Now, we do not deny Obedience in the latter, but only in the former Case. In short, we are for obeying, tho' we *suffer* Injustice, provided only that we do not *commit* any. This I should think might satisfy any reasonable Men. But, being extremely loath to differ from any of my

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* Sanderson de Oblig. Consc.

Brethren, I shall go one Step farther still. I acknowledge that there are some Actions that would be sinful for me to do without the Command of a Superior, which yet I am obliged to do when so commanded. For Example, it would be sinful in me to spend a whole Day in doing any Thing that appeared to me to be perfectly idle, and to no Purpose. And yet the Command of a proper Superior may lay me under an Obligation to do it. But then, such Actions must be, in their own Nature, so essentially indifferent, that the moral Goodness or Evil of them, depends entirely upon the Motives, Ends, and other Circumstances of them. These Concessions being made, I must after all insist upon one Exception, and upon one only, being, in all other Things, willing to give not only passive but active Obedience to my Superiors, and that not only for Wrath, but for Conscience Sake, and that is when the Command appears to require what would be sinful in me to do; what no Circumstances can alter the Nature and the Tendency of; and especially what appears to me to have a direct Interference with the great End of my Office, which is the eternal Salvation of immortal Souls. Here, Sir, it is where I stop. And I'll venture to say more: Here it is, whatever the Heat of an Argument may lead you to say in a Dispute, yet here it is where you yourself would actually stop in Practice, and here it is where every good Man must stop in Fact, it being essential to the Character to prefer the Authority of God to that of any Man, or of any Creature, or even of the whole Creation put together.

AN. I confess you have gone farther than I imagined you would. But still you proceed upon a Supposition which will never be granted. What puts it in your Head that we prefer the Authority of Men to that of God? The Authority of God I shall allow to be as great as you please. And the greater it is, the stronger is our Argument. For 'tis the Command of God that we should obey our Superiors. When a lawful Authority upon Earth is once interposed in the last Resort, there the Authority of God ceases, at least it is so far from interfering with the other, that, on the contrary, we are by Divine Authority referred to the other, as the immediate Rule of our Conduct, however God may, in many Cases, see fit to call our Superiors to account at his Bar for the Use they have made of that Authority, which nevertheless he himself has given them.

TH. If you did not know how favourable our Principles are to human Authority, I am sure it is not the Fault of the disobedient Brethren. Look but to the first 10 or 12 Pages of the Answers to the Reasons of Dissent from the Commission in *March*

1752, where you will find the Pleadings of our Brethren, who found themselves straitened as to their Obedience, recapitulated: I must beg Pardon, *Andropodius*, to say, according to the old Proverb, *There's none so deaf as those who will not hear*. I could undertake to make a deaf Man sensible, that we allow every Thing to human Authority that's consistent with its Subordination to that of God. But I own I despair of being ever able to beat this into any Man's Head, who is determined to oppose us, and has no Argument to use against us but what supposes the contrary. Let him be told it ever so often, yet when ever he attempts to reason he must forget it. You have been told in the Assembly, you have been told in the Commission, by Members, by Parties at your Bar, you have been told in Committees, you have been told an hundred Times in private Conversation, you have been told in Pamphlets published to the World, that we are willing to obey our Superiors, Civil and Ecclesiastical, in every Thing that is not sinful, that we pay a higher Deference to none but God himself. This is the very Doctrine that you have raised such a Cry against, as if it subverted the Foundations of Government, and overturned human Society. This is the very Crime for which you have deposed Mr. *Gillespie* from Office and Benefice. And yet you ask, what puts it in my Head that you prefer the Authority of Men to that of God? I assure you, Sir, my Head would never have produced such a Suspicion of itself. But I must have stopt my Ears and my Eyes, to have prevented it entering there, when my Head was among the Clergy of the Church of *Scotland* for two Years bypast. The Cry that has been raised against a Doctrine that maintained nothing else, but the Supremacy of God's Authority over that of Men, could not fail to put it in my Head. The rebuking one Presbytery and suspending another for adhering to that Principle, has driven it further into my Head. The deposing Mr. *Gillespie* for the same Cause, has effectually riveted it there, Sir. And now when you offer to draw it out; your very Attempt does but fix it the deeper. If you would admit this single Exception, that the Laws of Men do then only not oblige to Obedience when they appear to require what is sinful or forbidden by God, all Controversy would be at an End upon this Branch of the Subject, viz. the Duty of Inferiors. And yet 'tis here where you always chuse to lay the Strefs of the Argument.

AN. You do not seem to reflect upon the Consequences of opening the least Gap in the Fence which God himself has placed about the Authority of a supreme Government, at least about such supreme Government as is supposed to continue in the Ex-

ercise of their Authority. 'Tis like the Sea Dykes in *Holland*: If the Water should once break in, how small-soever the Aperture be, the whole Country is threatened with an Inundation, and till once the Breach be closed, there can be no Prospect of any Thing but universal Ruin and Desolation. In like Manner, there can be no Medium between absolute, unlimited Obedience to the last Resort of human Government, and overturning it from the very Foundation. This Pretence of God's Authority when once admitted, must as naturally, and as necessarily, spread its malignant Influence over the whole Extent of human Laws, as the Waters when they have penetrated into a low and level Country, by their natural Tendency to an *Æquilibrium*, must very soon cover the whole. And therefore if it appears to be the Will of God, that any Submission or Obedience at all continues to be due to the highest Power in any Government, it must, at the same Time, appear to be his Will that all Obedience is due without the least Reservation.

TH. I really cannot help smiling, *Andropodius*, (for which I beg your Forgiveness) at the ridiculous, and, I dare say, unforeseen lengths that you lead one another on to, and the Figure you would make with your Principles in certain Situations which are far from being impossible. Let me only ask you; can you really think of nothing where you your self would be obliged to stop, short of overturning the Government? The highest Assertors of unlimited Obedience have, at length, been forced to set Limits to their own. Achbp. *Sancreft* and the rest of the High Church Clergy in *England* talked once in your Strain: But were forced before the Revolution to change their Note. And indeed there are no sort of Men whatsoever, but after all their Flights, (which I consider rather as Figures of Rhetorick than as literal Expressions of the real Sentiments of any Man's Mind) will stop somewhere. I remember a Story which my Author had from one of the Gentlemen concerned, and which I the rather incline to tell you, not only as it will set the Doctrine of blind and implicate Obedience in a proper Light, but as it will give you a Specimen of what sort of Clergy we may expect, as soon as the Method of filling our Vacancies, for the sake of which you have begun to depose the best we now have, becomes entirely triumphant.

Two Gentlemen who had both the honour to serve in the first Parliament of King *George* the 1st, for a certain County in *England* were one Day taking the Diversion of hunting together. But meeting with little sport in the Fields, and a sultry Day, they both grew tired of it. One of the Gentlemen who was a zealous Whig informed the other that in a House which was in their

their View, there lived a noted High Church Doctor, who had made himself famous in the End of Q. *Anne's* reign for preaching up the Doctrine of Passive Obedience and Nonresistance that was then so much in Vogue, with equal Ignorance and Zeal. As they were thirsty, and the Doctor had the Reputation of being hospitably disposed, and never wanted good Ale, he proposed to go and drink a Bottle of the Doctor's Ale, and if they could lead the Conversation to his favourite Subject, he might possibly afford them that Diversion which they missed in the Fields. The other Gentleman very easily consented, having likewise some Curiosity to see a Man he had heard so much talk of in the County. The Doctor gave them a hearty Welcome, and a Bottle of his best Ale. The Subject which they chose to be entertained with, the Doctor himself was so full of, that the Conversation very soon came to turn upon it. And he carried the Point as high as the briskest and most sanguine of our young Assembly Orators, even the Length of the most unlimited active Obedience. One of the Gentlemen thinking to puzzle him by putting Cases, asked him, Whether, if the King should demand the use of his Wife, he would think himself obliged to yield her up? Yes, Sir, says he, the fault would be his, not mine. But says the other, if the King should order you to turn Papist, would you obey him? Yes, Sir, says he, I would. What, continued the Gentleman, if he should order you to turn *Mahometan*? Sir, says the Doctor, I do not know but I might. The Gentleman hitherto unsuccessful in his Queries, being willing to try whether there was not something that would stagger this Champion, found he had attacked him on the wrong Side, and being pretty sure there was no Body but would stick at something, at last happened to hit the Nail on the Head. Doctor, says he, I did not imagine that you would have carried the Point so far. But I beg leave to put only one Question more to you. Pray what if the King should order you to turn Presbyterian, would you obey him in that? This put the Doctor at last to a stand, and having weighed the puzzling Case, a few Moments, in his own thoughts, between the Credit of his Doctrine, and the odious Idea he had formed of a Presbyterian, the last immediately got the better. And having set his Hands to his Sides, he cryed out with great Vehemence, God damn my Soul then!

AN. I am sure *Theodulus* you know us better then to imagine that foolish Story applicable to any of your Brethren in the Church of *Scotland*.

TH. Really, Sir, I know you and many others of your Way of thinking to be Men of better Sense, and more Piety than this

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English Doctor; and I hope there is not a Minister in the Church of *Scotland* capable of the latter Part of the Story. (How long it may be so, God only knows, as we are fast wreathing about our Neck, that very Yoke, to which our Neighbour Church owes such worthy Clergymen.) But at the same Time, I know likewise so much of human Nature, that I believe there is no Absurdity so gross, but the very best and wisest sort of Men, carried along in the heat of Party Contention, may be heedlessly involved in, before they are aware, or can easily retreat. And tho' ingenious Men would not suffer themselves so easily to be caught in a visible Snare, but exert a little more Art than the Doctor had to avoid it, yet I must say, that in so far as this Controversy has been hitherto carried on among us, you have laid yourselves as open to the very grossest Absurdities of your Doctrine as ever any Men of equal Ingenuity did. For excepting only such avowed Atheists as *Hobbes*, or such low Tools as the Doctor I have mentioned, no Man that had considered the Question at all did ever before, I believe, refuse to yield, that one ought not to do what evidently appears to him to be a Sin, tho' commanded to do it by the highest Authority upon Earth. This however is an Acknowledgment which, as it would go far to decide the present Controversy, we have hitherto been so far from being able to extort from you, that 'tis the very Thing you have raised a Cry against, and actually impressed several well-meaning People as if it was inconsistent with all Government whatsoever. But, my dear Sir, let me tell you that tho' this be the Substance of what we plead for, 'tis what the highest Contenders of Obedience have been obliged expressly to grant. Even the *Jesuits* and the other Monkish Orders in the Church of *Rome*, who take a Vow of Obedience to their Superiors, and who are as capable of defending an Absurdity as any set of Men whatever, have in Effect yielded this. They contend avowedly for a blind Obedience, maintaining, that it is not the Business of the Inferior to enquire whether it be right or wrong which they are ordered by their Superiors to do, and that if it be evil, the Superior alone is to Answer for it, tho' our Saviour has fairly warned us, *Mat.* 15. 14. that if the Blind lead the Blind, not only the Leaders, but both shall fall into the Ditch. But then they maintain, at the same Time, that if the Command of the Superior appear *evidently* to be contrary to the Command of God, in that Case the Inferior ought not to obey†. This is likewise the very Doctrine of Dr. *Goodman* himself, who, in his serious and compassionate Enquiry, having proposed this Objection, that we are bound

† *Greg. de Val.* Tom. 3. Disp. 7. Q. 2.

bound to obey the Dictates of our Conscience before any Law or command of any human Authority, if they happen to interfere; owns in his reply, that this is true in Things notoriously and plainly Evil. Even Dr. *Sibthorp* in that Sermon which Archbishop *Abbot* was suspended for refusing to licence, has these express Words: "If Princes command any Thing which Subjects *may not perform, because it is against the Laws of God, or of Nature, or impossible: Yet Subjects are bound to undergo the Punishment, without either resisting, or railing, or reviling, and so to yield a Passive Obedience where they cannot exhibit on Active one* ---- I know no other Case but one of those three, wherein a Subject may excuse himself with Passive Obedience; but in *all other* he is bound to Active Obedience." † If you would but yield what Dr. *Goodman*, what Dr. *Sibthorp*, the mercenary Tools of arbitrary Power, never thought of denying, viz. that there are Cases wherein a Subject is not bound to Active Obedience, but may excuse himself with Passive Obedience; if you could but suffer yourselves to imagine it possible for the least Degree of Order or Government to remain among Mankind while they are bound to obey the Dictates of their Conscience before any human Law that intereferes therewith, the main doctrinal Difference upon this Subject would be at a End, and we would have nothing farther to do but to consider what appearance there is of Sin in the Orders that have been lately insisted on by our ecclesiastical Superiors, and the expediency of their making such a Point of them.

§. 4. AN. Are not you a rare Man *Theodulus*, to argue with? That first sets up a Fiction of your own Brain to contend with, and then no Wonder if it easily falls before you. Tho' I did not article with you for Liberty to complain, I cannot help upon this Occasion claiming a share in you Privilege. You think it hard to have more imputed to you than what you maintain: Why then do you treat others with the same Injustice? You would have a very easy task of it indeed, if you could get us to own it for our Doctrine that Men are at any Time obliged to commit a Sin. But are you not sensible of the Contradiction in Terms that there is in such a Proposition? To be a Sin, and to be a Thing that a Man is obliged to do, are Ideas that do evidently destroy one another. And therefore when we say, that in certain Circumstances one is obliged to do such Thing, 'tis plain that in our very asserting that, we must mean, that in those Circumstances it is no Sin, whatever it may be supposed to be in different Circumstances. Sin, as yourself have observed, is nothing else but what

† Rapin's Hist. of France Vol. I

what God has forbidden. But 'tis certain that the Prohibitions and Commands of God are very often controlled by one another. For Example, God forbids us to work on the Sabbath Day : And therefore to work on the Sabbath Day may, no doubt, be called a Sin. Yet our Saviour shows us, that another Command requiring Works of Necessity or Mercy, may lay us under an Obligation to work upon that Day. Will you from thence pretend to convict our Saviour of having taught that there are Cases where Men ought to commit Sin ? The obvious Meaning of what he says, and what we say, is that what is, in some Circumstances, a Sin, is in other Circumstances a Duty, and consequently no Sin. I am really surpris'd at your Slowness in apprehending so very plain a Thing, and cannot help wondring that you are so ignorant of *the Nature and first Principles of Society*, as not to perceive how applicable this Observation is to Government. " When Men are considered as Individuals, we acknowledge " they have no Guide but their own Understanding, and no Judge " but their own Conscience. But we hold it for an undeniable " Principle, that as Members of Society, they are bound, in many " Cases, to follow the Judgment of the Society. By joining " together in Society we enjoy many Advantages which we could " neither purchase nor secure in a disunited State. In Consideration of these we consent, that Regulations for public Order " shall be established ; not by the private Fancy of every Individual, but by the Judgment of the Majority, or of those with " whom the Society has consented to intrust the legislative Power. " Their Judgment must necessarily be absolute and final, and " their Decisions received as the Voice and Injunction of the " whole. In a numerous Society it seldom happens that all the " Members think uniformly concerning the Wisdom and Expedience of any publick Regulation : But no sooner is that Regulation enacted, than private Judgment is so far superceded, " that even they who disapprove it, are notwithstanding bound " to obey it, and to put it in Execution if required."

TH. Will you allow me, *Andropodius*, to add any more Articles to our Capitulation ?

AN. I shall never be against any that are not unreasonable.

TH. What I have to propose is only, that from henceforth, neither of us should give our selves the trouble of wondring at the other, or being surpris'd at what is advanced on the opposite Side. And my Reason is, that otherways the Match will be unequal. For my Part, Sir, I had done wondring before you began to it. And it would not now be at all surprising to me, however strange it appeared to Dr. *Tillotson*, if even some of the
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best and wisest Men should put me to prove that an Egg is not an Elephant, and that a Mullet Bullet is not a Pike. To deny any of those Propositions, is a very small and trivial Matter to me, in comparison with denying that God is to be obeyed rather than Men. And that a Paper * from whence you have just now been borrowing, should assert such Doctrine in the Face of the General Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*, and pass uncensured, could not have failed to excite my Wonder, if I had not been abundantly prepared for any thing of this Sort.

AN. But pray, Dear Sir, who has yielded to you that this is the Doctrine of that Paper?

TH. Sir, You must either yield that, or you must yield another Thing, which, I am sure, my Friend *Andropodius* (I cannot answer for every Body) will never yield. And that is that the Plea which the Apostles *Peter* and *John* insist upon, over and over again † with the *Jewish* Sanhedrim, the supreme Court of that Nation both in civil and religious Affairs, has no meaning whatsoever, but is neither more nor less than a Piece of downright Nonsense. According to the new Doctrine, Sir, 'tis the meekest and idlest Chimera; nay, an absolute Impossibility, that ever we can be reduced to the Dilemma which the Apostles, knowing no better, it seems, imagined themselves under, of disobeying either God or Men. Suppose it allowed that an inferior Court may command a sinful Action, we need only appeal, and the Moment that the Authority of the dernier Resort is interposed, there is an end put to all Pretences of divine Authority in Opposition to it. God himself is then supposed, with all his Authority, to enforce the Command, however iniquous it might have been in an inferior Court, and that with a Clause of *non obstante* to whatever he might be supposed otherwise to have required of us in that Matter. Now, not to controvert this Doctrine at present, let it be supposed, that this is the true Scripture Doctrine, or, as I believe, I should rather have said, that these are the first Principles of Society, and the Basis of all Order and Government among Men, my Question is, How you will make this and the Apostles Defence hang together. Their Defence, you see, is not that the Sanhedrim was but an Inferior Court, or that their Authority was now at an End by the Erection of the Christian Church. They allow them all the Authority that can be claimed by Men, and the Comparison is not stated between one kind of human Authority and another, but between the greatest Authority among Men

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* Reasons of Dissent from the Commiss. March 1752. and 5. 9.

† Acts 4. 19.

and that of God himself. But upon your Principles, how can these be supposed ever to clash?

The *Jewish* Rabbies themselves, of whom that high Court was composed, seem to have been quite ignorant of those first Principles of Society. For if they had the least inkling of them it would have been easy to have cut off this Retreat from the Apostles, and to have beat them out of it when they first had Recourse to it, with so triumphant a Victory, that they could never have taken Shelter there a second Time; and that in the very Words of our Dissenters. What could the Apostles have replied, had the High Priest answered: You seem to consider yourselves as Individuals, in which Capacity alone you have any Thing to do with the Authority of God. You certainly forget that you are Members of Society. Are not we those with whom the Society has consented to intrust the Legislative Power? And tho' it has happened that our Opinion and yours does not quadrate concerning the Wisdom and Expediency of that publick Regulation which you have been acquainted with, yet our Judgment must necessarily be absolute and final. No sooner is it enacted, than private Judgment is so far superseded, and even you who disapprove it, are notwithstanding bound to obey it.

Let me suppose, *Andropodius*, that you who lay so much stress upon human Authority, and maintain that God has subjected even his own Laws to be controlled thereby, had been some Years ago instructing one of your Parishioners who was a Servant in the Duties of that Station, and amongst other Things had told him that Obedience to his Master was expressly required by the Laws of the Land. Upon the back of this suppose that his Master had ordered this same Servant to follow him in the Rebellion, and the Man had, upon this, come to you with a Case of Conscience, and alledged that your Doctrine of Obedience to his Master was like to determine him against his own private Judgment. What if he had said, upon your calling it Rebellion and Disobedience to the Laws, and the Government? There, Sir, does my Difficulty lie. Rebellion, I am sure it cannot be, in my Case, nor Disobedience to the Laws. It may be so in my Master: But as for me, you know the Laws of the Land expressly require me to obey him. So that in obeying him I obey the Laws. And, I am sure, Obedience to the Government can never be Rebellion against it.

AN. I dare say, *Theodulus*, that is a Sophism that would never have entered into any but such a metaphysical Head as your own. But all this while you have left my Arguments untouched.

TH. Your Arguments, Sir, shall have all due Respect paid them.

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In the mean Time, I find every Thing that bears hard upon you is to pass for Metaphysics, whether it consists in separating Ideas that have a Difference, or in joining such as have a likeness. But I am in no Danger at all of breaking our Capitulation by wondering at your Antipathy to metaphysical Distinctions: For all the Appearance of Argument in what you have said continues only to impose upon People, while they jumble Things that have some likeness together in one confused Hotch Potch, and vanishes in Proportion as the several different Ideas are separated and set in a clear and distinct Point of View. It puts me in mind of the Monster that was like a Horse, and yet not a Horse. It may pass with superficial Reasoners for something like Argument, but cannot stand a severe Examination. And all this likeness lies in nothing else but this, that in both the Subjects you have touched upon, there is *something* as you would have it. And from hence, like some People more cunning and importunate than modest, who when once they get in but a Finger, are never satisfied till it be followed by the whole Hand, you put a Conclusion upon the unwary, as if *every Thing* was so. But if it had been the fashion in your younger Days, as it was in mine, to attend the *Semi Class*; you would have heard of a Maxim in Logick which will never admit of such reasoning. *A Particulari ad Universale non valet consequentia.*

AN. Truly, Sir, tho' neither I nor my Friends thought it worth while to spend a Year in learning Scholastick Jargon; yet I think a little common Sense, especially when improved by the reading of good Authors, may enable me to distinguish between just and false reasoning. The Maxim you mention I have often heard of, and cannot refuse to admit. To be sure it would be a very groundless Inference to conclude, that because you and I are here just now, therefore all the Ministers of the Church of *Scotland* are here. But I would be glad to know how I have offended against that Maxim.

TH. You have doubly offended against it. In the first Place, Would you not put it upon us, as a Conclusion to be universally admitted, that all the Moral Laws of God may be superseded, particularly by the Interposition of a human Authority, which God, you say, has enforced with his own. Perhaps, Sir, you did not express that so freely and so clearly as I have done. But this must proceed, if not from some secret Suspicion, which you cannot entirely rid yourself of, at least from something else than its not being necessary to your Argument. For, if there be so much as *one* Moral Law of so inflexible and uncomplaisant a Nature, that no Circumstances whatsoever are able to convert the

Breach of it into a Duty, or even to what is lawful and allowable; if there be such an essential and intrinsic Fitness in *any Thing* that our Obligation to it is, (as Dr *Clark* and others have ventured to speak) eternal and immutable, the Conclusion becomes entirely useless, Sir, for your Purpose. But from whence do you draw such a Conclusion? Is it from any Thing else but this that *some* Instances may be given, of divine Laws being superseded by others? And will it follow, think you, by any just Consequence, that it must be so in *all* Cases? Because among the Duties that are incumbent upon us, there are some of greater and some of lesser Importance, some of a positive, and some of a more necessary and immutable kind, some that are to be considered but as Means, and some as Ends: And because Means must yield to Ends, and smaller Things to greater, positive Institutions to moral Duties, and even among moral Duties themselves, some that relate only to Matters of private Property, or other temporal Goods, may in some Cases be superseded by others that are either of more extensive Influence in the same kind, or that relate to Goods of a spiritual and eternal Nature; does it therefore follow, that there is nothing in Morals at all that is fixed and invariable? Because I may be obliged at the command of a Magistrate, or to prevent a much greater Evil in the same kind, to pull down my Neighbour's House without waiting for his Consent, will it therefore follow, that either the Command of a Creature, or the promoting of any temporal Good will indemnify me for the Murder of his Soul, and obstructing his eternal Salvation? Because Matters of temporal Property depend upon the repealable Laws of human Society, must therefore sacred Truth itself, which is eternal and unchangeable in its Nature, like him who is the Author of it, be used with the same Freedom? Where is the Justice, Sir, of such Inferences?

Upon this Occasion, I cannot help observing, that in this Branch of the Argument, it is very usual with you, and others that espouse the same Opinions, to treat a Passage of the Apostle *Paul*, in the very same Manner precisely, as you do the Plea of the Apostles *Peter* and *John* before the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, *i. e.* reduce it to an unmeaning Piece of Nonsense. The Passage I mean is, *Rom. iii. 8.* where the Apostle declares the Damnation to be just of those who maintained, *that we may do Evil that Good may come*, or of those who slanderously imputed such Doctrine to the Apostle. This Passage happens to stand most unluckily in the Way of you Gentlemen, who make all the Rules of Morality, even that of speaking Truth, so flexible, as to give Way whenever our comprehensive Views forsooth of greater Good

Good seems to demand it. Now, as the disputing of every Particular would lead us too far at present, let it be allowed that physical Good is the highest we know any Thing of; let it be allowed that the Fly creeping upon a Pillar of *St. Pauls*, to which the Author of the *Guardian* compares the Free-thinkers, had a most distinct Comprehension of the whole of that *Fabrick*. You must forgive me, if I can think of nothing else when I hear the diminutive Wretches that are crawling on the Surface of this little Globe talking of a whole, and pretending to repeal the Laws of the Author of this whole, according to their Views of a Chain of Consequences, whereof they but scarcely and dimly perceive one or two Links. But to let these Things pass, what was it that alarmed the Apostle *Paul* in the Doctrine he passes so severe a Censure on? Was it any thing, or nothing? You do not teach you say, that Men may do Evil that Good may come. For when Good is to come, the Action that is necessary to produce it cannot be Evil. Be it so. But then neither could it be taught it seems by any Body. The Thing itself is like *Peter's* Defence, an express Contradiction. And if some unthinking Creature should pronounce the unmeaning Sounds, 'tis impossible that it could do any Hurt. So the Apostle was only seized with a groundless Pannick, it seems, upon no Occasion at all.

Again Sir, In the second Place, I shall readily grant you, that as Members of Society we are bound, *in many Cases*, to follow the Judgment of the Society. Nay, I shall give it more liberally than you seem to take it, and frankly own, that we are bound to do this in all Cases, not only that are agreeable to the Laws of God, but that are not contrary to them. Now what is the Conclusion you draw from such Premisses? or rather, that you endeavour to slip unawares upon People that are off their Guard? only by rising imperceptibly, as it were, in your Expressions, till you have PALMED it upon us, in a Manner almost unperceived. You dare scarcely say openly and avowedly: Therefore we are bound to do so in all Cases. Though this is the Conclusion that 'tis evident you must be at, or else your Words are all thrown away. But first we are bound to do so *in many Cases*. And when this is once admitted, you steal another Step upon us, and what you are yet afraid to assert universally, you venture to say only indefinitely. What you are conscious cannot bear the open Light, you insinuate covertly and with some Obscurity. *Their Judgment must necessarily be absolute and final, i. e.* (if instead of mumbling it between your Teeth, you could yet venture to speak it out) "Every Decision of fallible Men, without any Exception, must not only be acquiesced

“ quiesced in, but actively obeyed, even by such as are convinced of the Unlawfulness of so doing.” But as this last Part of the Conclusion is the only Thing that needed a Proof, and as the Words (for want of Arguments) are yet but raised a little nearer to it, a still plainer Insinuation must follow. And therefore at last, *private Judgment is so far superseded, that even they who disapprove it, are notwithstanding bound to obey it.* And now after all these wary Steps, and gradual Risings in your Language, for that is all the Argument we have from you, dare you yourself say it no plainer? Can you not venture beyond the soft Word *disapprove*? which still involves the Matter in a Mixture of true and false. Sir, If you are under a Necessity of wrapping yourself up in Obscurity, we who have no Occasion for the Shades of Darknes, and find no Advantage in ambiguous Terms, can tell you plainly that we have no Scruple in executing all Decisions that we disapprove of, which can be executed without Sin on our Part, and yet can never be induced to obey when we apprehend any sinful Act is required to be performed by us.

O Sir! How bold and how open is Truth? How free and how easy in its Gait? How much above the mean Shifts and low Artifices of Error? It can stalk majestick in broad Day, without fearing the most prying and curious Eye, and offers its self exposed to be narrowly view'd on all Sides by the most careful Observer. And how mean? how sneaking a Thing is Error? that cannot thrive but in Shades, and loves nothing so much as Obscurity and Disguises. She dares not march up to you in a straight Road, and with a bold open Front, but in winding Mazes, and couched under a Vail. Detect her but, and you destroy her.

———For no Falshood can endure
Touch of celestial Temper, but returns
Of Force to its own Likeness.

MILTON.

And indeed I cannot reflect upon the Manner in which this Temptation is conducted, to persuade us, that we may innocently act against the Light of our Minds, and the Dictates of our own Conscience; that we may break the Laws of our Maker in Obedience to those of his Creatures, without being reminded of the Approaches of the grand Tempter, as described by the same Poet:

Nearer he drew, and many a Walk travers'd
Of stateliest Covert; Cedar, Pine, or Palm;
Then voluble and bold; now hid, now seen,

Among thick woven Arborets and Flowers

—— With Tract oblique

At first (as one who sought Access, but fear'd

To interrupt) sidelong he works his Way :

As when a Ship, by skilful Steers-man wrought

Nigh Rivers Mouth, or Foreland, where the Wind

Veers oft, as oft so steers, and shifts her Sail.

If instead of adopting this Paragraph of the Dissenters, *Andropodius*, you had but thoroughly considered it, I cannot think but it would have contributed to set so honest a Heart as yours right, instead of confirming you in wrong Sentiments. For I verily think that the Writing of it has half converted the Authors themselves. And indeed I wish that some of the highest talkers on your Side of the Question would commit their thoughts on this Subject to Writing, and see how they look upon Paper. For my Part, I think I see the Drawer of these Reasons of Dissent, taking the Pen in his Hand, full of the extravagant Assertions, and the untenable Arguments, he had no doubt born his Part in elsewhere, and arrested at once in the midst of his Career with the Thoughts of putting them in black and white. I'll warrant that before he sat down in his Closet, he had been as high as any of you in his Assertions of the most unlimited, implicate Obedience ; and of all Order and Government being overturned, if the least Exception were to be admitted. But now that a Sheet of Paper is before him, does he venture to write so there ? No Sir ; see how low he falls all at once ! See how he softens Things now ! — We are bound in *many* Cases to follow the Judgment of the Society. — Is this the Thing that was denied by those whom he writes against ? Dares he say any Thing that's an express Contradiction to what either the Commission or the Presbytery of *Dunfermline* had asserted ? — The Judgment of the Society, he says, must be absolute and final. — Final it is allowed to be, and dares he say any more in this State of Recollection, but in an ambiguous Word ? — But even those who disapprove it, he says, are obliged to obey it. — And is that all ? another ambiguous Word again ? There is not a Member of the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, I dare say, but have Freedom to execute Sentences which they disapprove in a certain Degree. — Can it be want of Words, think you, a Poverty of Language only, to which all these Softenings are to be imputed ? I have heard, and you have heard, *Andropodius*, the very Things that must be supposed to be insinuated, and which are indeed made abundantly plain by what follows, asserted in much stronger

Terms,

Terms, in Terms that could not be accused of mollifying the Doctrine, in Terms that have been always regarded, rather as an unnatural Swelling of Language. And therefore, I beseech you, write, and I am confident it will cure such Tumours.

Writing, Sir, has had the same Effect, you see, upon your Arguments as upon your Assertions. Did this Writer, think you, never pretend to reason upon the Subject? Is he the only Person among you that never argued from the implicate Obedience that is commonly insisted on in military Discipline, and by the civil Magistrate in their Officers and Executioners? But all his Soldiers, and Hangmen have deserted him now, Sir. And what have they left him in their Stead? Nothing but the bare, timid, ambiguous, eaten in Assertions you have heard of. A Closet, dear Sir, a Closet above all Things for this Controversy! I could venture to trust it with every serious thinking Person among you, when you are separated from one another, and recollected in your Retirements.

If there is any Pretence of an Argument in what you have quoted, it is just such a one as you have already acknowledged the egregious Weakness of. The only thing in the whole Paragraph, which, without any Distinction of ambiguous Terms, will be readily granted to him, and consequently the only Thing he has to argue from is, that in *many* Cases we are bound to follow the Judgment of the Society. And as we have so little to give him, we scorn to give it in a niggardly Way, and let him make the best of it. We own ourselves bound to this, not only in Consideration of the Advantages reaped in Society, but in Consideration of the Authority of God who has instituted Government both in the Church and in the World. And we own ourselves bound to it, not only in many Cases but in all Cases, where there is no Interference with the Authority of God himself, whom we still own for our Guide and Judge, Sir, whatever he or you may think fit to acknowledge, and that both as Individuals, and as Members of Society. And will he from hence conclude, that therefore we are bound to do so in all Cases? and particularly in Cases where there is an Interference between such Judgment and the Authority of God? By the same Kind of Syllogism, I'll undertake to prove, that all the Inhabitants of *China* were born in *Europe*. Why, 'tis certain, that many Men have been born in *Europe*: But the *Chinese* are Men; therefore the *Chinese* were born in *Europe*.

As you have indulged me so long, I shall only beg leave, before I stop, to compare your Doctrine with that of *Hobbes*, which will shew us that 'tis impossible to think deliberately and write upon

upon this Subject, without being forced to admit some Exceptions from the general Rules that we are ever so fond of establishing. He, of all Writers, that I know any thing of, has carried this Matter farthest, till the Reasons of Dissent appeared. He with you rejects the Distinction between active and passive Obedience, asserts that active Obedience itself must be universal, and in order to this gives human Laws a Power to controule the Rules of Morality. And yet tho' in Contradiction to himself, he is obliged to admit of several Exceptions, such as Blasphemy, Suicide, Parricide. And (which is decisive of the whole controversy between us; if you would not carry the Point beyond even *Hobbes* himself) he allows that there may be many Cases where some that have a just Scruple ought not to obey, at the same Time that others who have no Scruple, may. Provided, that it be always taken for granted, that the Rulers have a Power to punish the Disobedient, of which Power he does not deny there may be a sinful Exercicio *. Which is all Sir, that ever was pretended on our Side. So that the highest Assertors of blind Obedience, let

* In the Margin, he says: *Obedientiam non recte distingui in activam et passivam. And in the Text: Sunt qui facta contra legem civilem, quando poena ipsa lege definitur, expiari putant, si poenam volentes subeant, neque reos esse coram Deo violatae legis naturalis (quamquam violando civiles leges violamus quoque naturales, quae jubent civiles observari) eos qui poenam solverunt quam lex exigebat. Tanquam lege non vetaretur factum, sed poena pretii loco proponeretur, quo licentia faciendi ea quae lege prohibentur venundaretur.---Inanis igitur est distinctio illa obedientiae in activam et passivam, &c. Hobbes de Civie, Cap. 14. Art. 23. Lex naturalis omnes leges civitates jubet observari. Nam ubi obligamur ad obedientiam antequam sciamus quid imperabitur, ibi universaliter et in omnibus obedire obligamur. Ex quo sequitur legem civilem nullam, quae non sit lata in contumeliam Dei, (cujus respectu ipsae civitates non sunt sui juris, nec dicuntur leges ferre) contra legem naturalem esse posse. Nam etsi naturae lex prohibet furtum, adulterium, &c. si tamen lex civilis jubeat invadere aliquid, non est illud furtum, adulterium, &c. Id. ibid. Cap. 14. Art. 10. Cum jure absoluto summi Imperantis, tanta connectitur civium obedientia, quanta ad civitatis Regimen necessario requireretur, id est tanta ut jus illud frustra non sit concessum. Hujusmodi autem obedientiam, licet ea aliquibus de causis aliquando negari jure possit, quia tamen praestari major non potest, simplicem vocabimus. Nascitur autem ad eam praestandam obligatio non immediate ex eo pacto, in quo jus nostrum omne ad civitatem transfusimus; sed mediate, nempe ex eo, quod sine obedientia jus Imperii frustra esset, et per consequens omnino constituta civitas non fuisset. Aliud enim est, si dico, jus tibi do quilibet imperandi; aliud, si dico, Faciam quicquid imperabis. Potestque tale esse mandatum, ut interfici malim quam facere. Siquidem ergo teneri nemo potest, ut velit interfici, multo minus tenetur ad id quod morte est gravius. Si jubear ergo interficere meipsum, non teneor. Nam etsi negavero, nec jus Imperii frustra est, cum alii habere possint qui id facere jussi non recusant.*

let them but think a while on the Subject, will be forced to yield as much as we have any Occasion for. May I not therefore say again, *Andropodius*, write, I beseech you, and you will come at Length to confute yourselves.

§ 5. AN. Why truly Sir, I cannot say that I have any Inclination that Way: And in the present State of our Affairs, we are under no Necessity to do it. *Scribere* may be your Province; but remember that *proscribere* is ours. And I doubt much, considering the other Means we have to maintain our Superiority, if ever we had blotted Paper on the Subject, if we had not by some unlucky Chance, been a Minority in *March* last. If any of our then Dissenters, having once got in their Hand, are pleased to proceed any farther this Way, for the Sake of converting either you or themselves, they shall be heartily welcome for my Share. But in the mean Time, *Theodulus*, I would advise you, before you write upon this Subject to know better what it is you are writing against. For tho' I did not chuse to interrupt you till you stopt of your own Accord, I must now tell you, that you have been all this while talking besides the Purpose. If *Hobbs*, or any Body else, lays down Principles of unlimited Obedience, and then contradicts himself, by admitting moe Exceptions than indeed I think are necessary, let him or them answer for it. For our Parts, we claim no Alliance with such Writers. Nor is it at all their System that we espouse. Who ever heard us talking of Passive Obedience and Nonresistance? Do we not boast of the glorious Revolution as well as you? Such extraordinary Cases, as our Dissenters justly observe, we can easily conceive there may be, as will give any Man a just Title to seek the Dissolution of the Society to which he belongs; or at least will fully justify his withdrawing from it. And I must say, *Theodulus*, not that I am surprized, if that offends you, but that you are the less excusable in imputing to us such Principles, when you cannot but know, that in the Reasons of Dis-

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bunt, neque id recusio quod facere pactus sum. Similiter si is qui summum habet Imperium seipsum, imperantem dico, interficere alicui imperet, non tenetur: quia intelligi non potest ut id pactus fuerit. Neque Parentem, sive is innocens, sive nocens sit, et jure condemnatus; cum et alii sint, qui id facere jussi volunt, et filius mori quam vivere infamis atque exosus malit. Multi alii casus sunt, in quibus cum mandata aliis quidem factu inhonesta sunt, aliis autem non sunt, obedientia ab his præstari, ab illis negari jure potest: atque id salvo jure quod Imperanti concessum est absolutum. Nam illi in nullo casu, eos qui obedientiam negabunt interficiendi jus adimitur. Caeterum qui sic interficiunt etsi jure concessio ab eo qui habet, tamen eo jure aliter atque recta ratio postulat utentes, peccant contra leges naturales; id est, contra Deum. *Id. ibid. cap. 6. art. 13.*

sent, Obedience is not pleaded for without any Exception. And tho' you took up my Words a little too hastily, and understood them in an independent and unconnected Sense, yet if you'll take the Trouble to look into the Paper from whence they are borrowed, and read to a Point, you will be convinced, I hope, of our Moderation. Even those who disapprove a Regulation that is enacted, are bound to obey, and if required, to put it in Execution. But is this asserted absolutely? Read on, and you will find these Words. Unless in a Case of such gross Iniquity, and manifest Violation of the original Design of the Society, as justifies Resistance to the supreme Power, and makes it better to have the Society dissolved, than to submit to established Iniquity. And pray what would you have more? Do you maintain that as long as one continues in a Society, professes Regard for it, and reaps the Emoluments of it; he may refuse to obey its Laws? Would not this be manifestly acting both a disorderly and dishonest Part? He lays claim to the Privileges of the Society, whilst he contemns its Authority, and by all Principles of Reason and Equity is justly subjected to its Censures. Is not this extremely obvious? And do you expect that any Body will take the Trouble of proving it by a formal Argument? They who maintain that such Disobedience deserves no Censure, maintain in Effect, that there ought to be no such Thing as Government and Order. They deny those first Principles by which Men are united in Society; and endeavour to establish such Maxims as will justify not only Licentiousness in ecclesiastical, but Disorder and Rebellion in civil Government. They surrender the most essential Prerogative of Society. They desert the Principles, and betray the Rights of the Constitution; as our Dissenters most unanswerably argue.

TH. As they assert, you mean. For surely you do not take this for reasoning. Indeed if they be deficient in Logick, they do the best they can to supply the want of it with Rhetorick. If the Thing was to be driven into us with high Words, often repeated, they must be allowed to have acquitted themselves extremely well. And if there was any Body who maintained in Opposition to them, that as long as one continues in a Society, &c. he may refuse to obey its Laws, in the Sense which that indefinite Expression is apt to be taken in at first View, I confess, Sir, that such an unreasonable Person would not deserve either the Logick or the Rhetorick of the Dissenters. For one to claim the Advantages of Society and yet refuse to obey any of its Laws: To profess a regard for it, at the same Time that he will neither acquiesce in its Decisions, nor suffer his own Ac-

tions to be determined by their Authority in all Cases where he is left at Liberty by the superior Authority of God; this, I acknowledge, would be acting a very unreasonable and inconsistent Part. But may not one very justly profess a due regard to any human Society, while at the same Time he prefers the Authority of God? While he refuses to obey none of its Laws but such as appear to him inconsistent with the Obedience which he owes to the divine Commands? And even in Cases where he cannot be an active Executor of its Orders, does not refuse to yield a passive Submission? Sir, the using an Expression which carries the first Sense, and so exhibits an Absurdity, and may likewise be taken in the second Sense, which is the Doctrine they had to oppose, is the sum of all the reasoning we have in this Paragraph.

But as to the Injustice I have done you and the Dissenters in overlooking the Exception whereby they have limited the universal Obedience that Subjects owe to their Superiors, I shall give you two Reasons, why I took no Notice of it. The first is, Because however you may be driven at least to admit of some Exception; yet 'tis certain that those who espouse your Side of the Question do usually stick to an absolute universality of Obedience, till they be forced to let go their Hold. It is not only in private Conversation but in the publick Judicatories of the Church that you must be conscious to yourselves, you are wont to carry the Matter thus far. I remember, Sir, I myself was Witness to a Debate upon this Subject in the Committee of Overtures of the Assembly 1751, where the Point was maintained in its utmost extent with the Concurrence and Approbation of the whole Party. There is one Circumstance of that Debate that is still fresh in my Memory. It happened that the barbarous Orders which *Saul* gave to his Guard to slay the Priests of the Lord, upon no Provocation whatsoever was mentioned as an Order which it was sinful to obey. Sir, even this was not admitted on the other Side. A Gentleman who signs the Reasons of Dissent, and who has long made a considerable Figure at least at the Bar of the Assembly, being a Member of that Committee, did without contradiction from any Minister or Elder on that Side of the Question, maintain, that if such Orders had been given by a proper Authority it would have been a Duty to have obeyed them. I have no Reason to doubt that you are all in the same Way of thinking, as you never fail to represent the most hideous Tragedy as the Consequence of the least Exception being admitted, if we should insinuate for any on our Part. No less than the Foundations of Society, the very first Principles of Government are over-

turned,

turned, you know, in that Case. All Order is subverted in a Moment. And nothing but the wildest Chaos of Anarchy and Confusion is presented to our View.

This Consideration, Sir, had the greater weight with me, because of my second Reason, which is this : That the Exception which you do admit, when it comes out, does not in the least Degree affect the Argument, or at all change the State of the Question, in so far as I apprehend the mischievous Nature and Consequences of your Doctrine. The Argument is not at all affected thereby. For suppose the Terms of your Conclusion altered, and the Argument instead of running thus : We are bound in *many* Cases to follow the Judgment of the Society ; therefore we are bound to do so in *all* Cases ; to run thus : Therefore we are bound to do so in all Cases, except when the Society is or ought to be dissolved ; will this be one whit better reasoning, Sir ? If there be but one grain more thrown into the Conclusion than there is in the Premises, they will not be able to bear the Weight. I can still by the same sort of reasoning prove, that all the *Chinese* were born in *Europe*. For it is just as good Logick to infer that, Because many Men have been born in *Europe* ; therefore *all* Men were so ; as to conclude, therefore all Men were so, except Negroes.

Sir, as the Argument stands upon the same, or at least upon an equally bad footing with the Exception, as without it ; so the admitting of this Exception does not, in the least Degree, lessen the Virulence of your Position, in so far as its poisonous Quality affects my Apprehension. It is not merely upon the account of the temporal Happiness or Misery of any human Society, that we scruple to give an active Obedience to all the Orders which may happen to be issued by the governing Powers. It is upon the account of the Interference between any such Orders, and the Commands of the most high God. If my disobeying God were to be attended with ever so little Effect upon the present and temporal Interests of Mankind, yet his Authority will always be sufficient with me to outweigh the Authority of all his Creatures who dare venture to countermand it. And therefore if I should be commanded but to say that 3 and 2 make 6, I would think myself sufficiently warranted to disobey, from the superior Authority of the God of Truth who has forbid me to lie. If either thro' the Willfulness or Mistake of my Superiors, I should be required in Obedience to any human Laws, to do a Thing which evidently appeared to me to be an Obstruction to the eternal Salvation of my fellow Christians, I would think myself obliged to prefer the Authority of him, who has assured me that

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it were better that a Millstone were hanged about my Neck and I were thrown into the Sea than that I should offend such, or hinder the Salvation of their Souls, especially as he has put me into an Office, the very Business of which is to promote it.

Now the contrary to this is expressly taught by you and the Dissenters, and clearly established as your Doctrine, by the very Exception which you boast of as a Limitation of it. I assure you, Sir, I am so far from overlooking their Exception, that I lay hold of it as a Circumstance which was necessary to give a determinate Sense to the preceding Words. All that they had hitherto said was expressed in such indefinite Terms that I would not have known what to make of it without this Addition. We had been told, that a Command was to be obeyed even by those who disapproved of it. This was a little ambiguous. We can say the same thing ourselves in a certain Sense. The Question still is, Whether we are bound to do so under every Degree and every kind of Disapprobation? Yes the Dissenters tell us plainly, unless in a Case of such gross Iniquity and manifest Violation of the original Design of the Society as justifies Resistance to the supreme Power, and makes it better to have the Society dissolved than to submit to established Iniquity. Now Gentlemen I understand you, which indeed I confess I was very loth to do. For if an Exception (as it is always taken for granted) confirms and establishes, defines and specifies the Rule in all Particulars not excepted, we now have your Meaning with some more Distinctness and Accuracy. So it seems if there be any immoral Action the commanding of which is not a sufficient Ground for Revolution in the Government, it may be our Duty to commit it. It seems one not only may commit Adultery, Incest, Drunkenness, Perjury, &c. without Sin; but if particular Acts of those Crimes be enjoined by the supreme Power in any Society, civil or ecclesiastical, it would be a Sin not to commit them. Only, perhaps, you might think fit in such Cases to call them by some other Names. For *Hobbes* tells us, that when they are commanded by our Superiours, then they are not Adultery, Incest, &c.

In short, the Question between us is now brought to a very easy and plain State. We are agreed, it seems, after all, your rhetorical flights, that active Obedience, ought not to be quite unlimited, and altogether implicate. But when we come to assign the Bounds of it, we take different Roads. The only Distinction that I, and many others, think proper to make here is, between Things lawful, and unlawful or sinful. We maintain, that our earthly Superiours are to be obeyed in all lawful Things, but not actively in such Things as appear to be unlawful for us

to do. And tho' we allow no private Person any publick Judgment, that is to have an Effect upon others, yet we think it incumbent upon every Individual to examine and judge himself, *i. e.* for the Regulation of his own Conduct, as one that is to answer to God for his own Actions, concerning the Lawfulness or Sinfulness of any Thing which he himself is appointed to do. This Distinction you will by no means admit, and private Judgment which is essential to it, it seems, has appeared to you in so hideous a Light, that you have filled all *Scotland* with the most tragical Exclamations about Order and Government being absolutely overturned from the very Foundations, if it should once be admitted. This being discarded, you distinguish between gross Iniquity, or great Sins, and lesser ones; between a manifest Violation of the End of Society, and what is not so. And Superiors are never to be disobeyed according to the Dissenters, but when the Action commanded to be done is one of those gross Iniquities that would be a manifest Violation of the original Design of Society and what would justify Rebellion and a Revolution. And consequently they ought to be obeyed, when they enjoin the Commission of Sins that are of a smaller Magnitude, or Sins that are not utterly inconsistent with the End of Society. Is not this, *Andropodius*, the true State of the Question?

AN. I confess, it looks somewhat like it, tho' it never appeared to me in that Light. And I cannot help suspecting, *Theodulus*, that you misapprehended them, some Way or other.

TH. Sir, The Gentlemen speak now so plain, that they have removed all possibility of misapprehending them. That some Sins ought to be committed in Obedience to our Superiors upon Earth, is not an Inference which they have left us to draw from something else. It is the very Doctrine they insist upon, and without which they assure us no Society can subsist. They could scarcely assert it in more express Terms than they have done. They not only reject, with the highest Indignation, the Distinction which we offer upon the Subject, of *Things lawful and unlawful* (which is of itself sufficiently decisive, for 'tis admitting that Obedience is due when the Thing required is a Sin, as well as when 'tis otherwise) but they specify a particular sort of Iniquity which they except, and that excepted, they affirm expressly, that we must obey in the Case of every other Sin whatsoever; or, to use their own Word; every other disapproved Thing that can be enjoined. If I should promise to give you whatever you can ask below a Shilling; does not this oblige me to give Six Pence or Ten Pence upon demand? If I should send my Servant to weed my Corn among which there happens to be a Parcel

cel of Lint growing, and he should ask whether or not he should pull the Lint : Suppose I tell him that he is to pull nothing but Thistles : Is not this as express a Prohibition, as if I had said : Do not pull the Lint ? Suppose there were ten Ridges of Corn in the Field, and he had some doubt about the eighth and ninth, if I should say, you are to weed them all but the tenth, is not this as plain and express almost, as if I had said : Weed the eighth and the ninth ? In like Manner when I ask the Dissenters : Should I obey my Superiors when they command a Thing that is sinful for me to do, and they answer : You must obey them in every disapproved Thing but what may dissolve the Society ; is not this saying, that I must obey them in the Case of all other Sins ? Pray, Sir, tell me, if any of your Parishioners should ask you, whether it was incumbent upon him to repent of and watch against Sins of Infirmity ? Would you answer that it was only presumptuous and enormous Sins that he should have any concern about ? Might you not as well tell him, that it was no Matter tho' he indulged himself in Sins of Infirmity ? The Presbytery of *Dunfermline* excuse themselves to the Commission from obeying their Order, because they apprehended it to be sinful in them to execute it. O ! Say the Dissenters, you are proceeding upon a most egregious mistake, to imagine that every Sin should be forborn which is enjoined by our Superiors. 'Tis only gross Iniquity of a certain particular kind. Can any Thing, Sir, be plainer than this ?

I knew very well, *Andropodius*, that you did not view Things in this Light, and that you would be startled whenever you came to perceive where they were leading you. But pray Sir, do but observe, that in the single Instance which they make an Exception of, it is not upon the Account of any Sin in the Thing. Indeed, if it was upon the Account of Sin that we were to disobey ; to be sure we would be obliged, for the same Reason, to disobey whenever the Commission of any Sin was enjoined. For as the Apostle *James* argues : *He that said, Do not commit Adultery, said also, Do not Kill**. The Reason (if this were it) holds equally in both Cases. But till once the Society is threatened with some greater Evil by persisting in Obedience, than Rebellion and a Civil War, the Dissenters would have you to go on in the Commission of as much Sin as the wickedest Rulers are pleased to require. You are never to stop, Sir, according to them, till once it becomes better to have the Society dissolved, than to submit to established Iniquity. Do not take my Word for it, Sir. Consult their own express Declaration, not whis-

* James ii. 11.

pered among their Friends, not brought out unawares in the Heat of a Dispute with Opposers ; but coolly written in a Closet, and in the Face of the Sun, offered to an Assembly of Christian Clergymen. What sort of Submission to Iniquity do they assert to be incumbent upon Subjects ? Is it only a passive Submission to the Iniquity of the Rulers ? By no Means, Sir. It is an active Obedience they are speaking of. It is a Submission to commit the Iniquity that is enjoined by the Rulers to be done by those who are sensible of the Iniquity of it. For even those who disapprove what is enacted, they tell us, are notwithstanding bound to obey it. Their private Judgment (not in respect of the Actions or others but) in respect of their own personal actings is superseded, and they must put it in execution if required, unless it be such a manifest Violation of the Design of Society as makes it better to have the Society dissolved than thus to submit to established Iniquity. And so it seems in ordinary Cases which do not call for the Dissolution of the Society, the Commission of Iniquity must be submitted to. Here you see, Sir, that active Obedience and passive Submission are declared to be exactly commensurate. And there is not a Sin, or Wickedness that can be ordered by the Rulers, below what should excite a Rebellion, but what ought to be committed by the Subjects.

I hope, *Andropodius*, when I am talking to you about Sin, I am making use of no Word but what you understand the meaning of. I am sensible, Sir, that the Word is like to be struck out of our Dictionaries, and that many who perhaps still pronounce the sound have no Idea affixed to it. If I thought you were one of those, I would give over reasoning with you, or at least alter the Strain of it. But as I know many have been led into your Way of thinking, who are convinced that Men are accountable for their Actions, I hope such, at least, will at length open their Eyes.

AN. I wish, *Theodulus*, you would not indulge a groundless Suspicion of any of your Brethren.

TH. Sir, I shall not say whether any of our Brethren, or even the young Gentlemen Lawyers that have in a great Measure, got the leading of the Assembly, do impose upon others, or are imposed upon themselves. It is certain that the Infidels have managed their Cause with so much Art, that there is scarcely an Article of their Creed, especially concerning the Foundations of natural Religion, but what is admitted and ingrossed into the System of some one or other who think themselves Christians, and even of many who I believe really are so. You know well enough, *Andropodius*, what Reception a Book has met with, I wish

I could not say, from yourself as well as others, the Design of which is to teach us, "That our peculiar Manner of conceiving human Actions, as right or wrong, and as praise or blame worthy, is wholly founded on a deceitful feeling; that what is termed moral Evil in the Language of Man, is, as well as moral Good, the result of general Laws, and of a necessary Connection betwixt Causes and their Effects." And which concludes with these Words, in an Address to the supreme Being. "What Mortals term Sin, thou pronouncest to be only Error. For moral Evil vanishes, in some Measure from before thy more perfect Sight: And as at the beginning of Days, thou sawest, so thou seest, and pronouncest still, that every Thing thou hast made is good. *"

As to the present Question, you have only three things to chuse upon, which of them you will stick to. Either you must say, that 'tis a chimerical Supposition that Rulers may command a sinful Action; or that every such Command is Ground sufficient for a Rebellion, or that every Action commanded by the supreme Ruler in Society, becomes a good Action when so commanded, be the Nature of it what will. The two first, I presume, you will not pretend to say. I am sure you are not so unacquainted with History as to alledge that no Instance can be produced of sinful Actions being commanded, by Rulers, civil or ecclesiastick. If you did; nothing would be more easy than even to glut you with Instances of it till you cry, Hold. As little will you pretend, I dare say, that every Instance of this ought to produce a Rebellion. If you did, instead of being Friends to Government and the Peace of human Society, you would teach a Doctrine productive of perpetual Wars and Bloodshed, a Doctrine far beyond what I believe the most licentious Writer upon Government ever yet taught, in Comparison with which ours is but a Trifle, and a Doctrine, (for I need say no more) inconsistent with your own Words, which imply that 'tis only gross Iniquity, inconsistent with the original Design of the Society, that can warrant or justify Resistance. If therefore active Obedience must be carried the whole Length precisely that passive Obedience ought to be, as you expressly affirm, you are reduced to the Necessity of holding, that the Command of a Creature can alter the Nature of Actions forbidden by God, and make that lawful which the Nature of Things, and the Authority of God has made unlawful; or else that God has fixed no Rules of Morality,

ality, but left them entirely to the Discretion of human Governors to be made or unmade at their Pleasure.

This last Opinion does indeed seem to me to be the Foundation of your Scheme. You have told us many a time that the Consciences of Inferiors are not at all concerned in the nature of any Action which they are commanded to do, that it does not belong to them to call in Question the Lawfulness of any thing that is once enjoined, that they have then nothing to do but to obey. The author of the Reasons of Dissent gives us broad Hints of it when he tells us, that the wickedest Action (such at least as would not justify a Rebellion; and what single or particular Action would?) being once enacted by Authority, private Judgement is superseded, and it becomes morally right to do it. Dr. Parker his Associate in this Cause, is if possible, yet more plain. He tells us, that "God hath appointed the Magistrates to be his Trustees upon Earth, and his Officials to act and determine in moral Virtues and pious Devotions according to all Accidents and Emergencies of Affairs: to assign new Particulars of the Divine Law; to declare new Bounds of Right and Wrong, which the Law of God neither doth nor can limit*" And, "That it is absolutely necessary to the Peace and Government of the World, that the supreme Magistrate of every Commonwealth should be vested with a Power to govern and conduct the Consciences of Subjects in the Affairs of Religion†." Agreeably to this we are told, that "In Cases and Disputes of publick Concernment, private Men are not properly *sui juris*: they have no Power over their own Actions: They are not to be directed by their own Judgments, or determined by their own Wills; but by the Commands and Determination of the publick Conscience: And if there be any Sin in the Command, he that imposes it shall answer for it; not I, whose whole Duty it is to obey: The Commands of Authority will warrant my Obedience, &c.‡." But of them all, Sir, commend me to honest Mr. Hobbs, another Labourer in the same Field, who makes no Scruple to maintain that moral Laws, in a State of Society, are nothing else but the civil Laws of any Country, be they ever so contrary to one another. So that Adultery, for Example, may be a very wicked Action on one Side of a River, and on the other Side, perhaps within a Stones cast, may be a per-

* Parker's Preface to Bp. Bramhall's Vindication, p. 80.

† Id. p. 10.

‡ Id. p. 308.

perfectly good and innocent Thing ¶. Which, after all, is really no more, Sir, but speaking out openly the very same Thing that others say by the most necessary and obvious Implication. How soon it may come to be said as openly in the General Assembly of the Church of *Scotland*, as it is by Mr. *Hobbs*, I will not pretend to conjecture. But this I will venture to say, that as *Hobbs* is evidently gaining Ground among us; so the Principles of Infidelity, and high Church Doctrines, are much nearer allied than perhaps is commonly apprehended. For in the same Proportion as human Authority over Mens Consciences is exalted; so must the Authority of God be depressed. Accordingly the Church of *Rome* who has carried her Dominion over Mens Consciences to the greatest Height, has exalted herself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, makes the Commandments of God repealable at her own Pleasure, and assumes a Power of making whatever she pleases morally Good or Evil. Cardinal *Cusanus* in his Epistles to the *Bohemians*, and other Writings, as he agrees with your Friends, as to the private Judgment of Individuals about their own personal Actions being superseded by Acts of human Authority; so he makes the Commandments of God alterable at the Pleasure of Men, and even exceeds Mr. *Hobbs* in one Expression at least, affirming expressly the most perfect and consummate Obedience to be that which is most irrational, and likeliest the Obedience of a Brute or Beast of Burden*.

And

¶ Doctrinarum autem quae ad seditionem disponent, una et prima haec est; *Cognitionem de bono et malo pertinere ad singulos*. In statu quidem naturali---veram eam esse concedimus. Sed in statu civili falsa est. Ostensum enim est Regulas boni et mali, justi et injusti, honesti et inhonesti, esse leges civiles, ideoque quod Legissator praeciperit, id pro bono; quod vetuerit, id pro malo habendum esse --- Peccatum meum est, quod faciens, peccatum meum esse puto; quod vero peccatum alienum esse puto, possum quandoque sine peccato meo facere.---Qui distinctionem hanc non observant, quoties cunque eis aliquid imperatum erit, quod illicitum vel est, vel videtur esse, incident in peccandi necessitatem. Nam facient contra conscientiam, si obdixerint; contra jus, si non obdixerint. Si fecerint contra conscientiam, monstrant se non metuere poenas futuri seculi; si fecerint contra jus, tollunt quantum in se est, societatem humanam et vitam civilem seculi praesentis. Opinio igitur eorum qui docent, peccare subditos quatenus mandata Principum suorum quae sibi injusta videntur esse, exsequuntur, et erronea est, et inter eas numeranda quae obedientiae civili adversantur. Dependet autem ab originali illo errore quem supra praecedente articulo notavimus. Nam per judicium nostrum boni et mali, facimus ipsi ut tam obedientia nostra quam inobedientia sit peccatum. *Hobbs de cive, cap. 12. art. 1. 2.* Etsi naturae lex prohibet furtum, adulterium, &c. si tamen lex civilis jubeat invadere aliquid, non est illud furtum, adulterium, &c. *Id. cap. 14. art. 10.*

* Dicitis praecepto Christi obediendum esse primo loco, deinceps Ecclesiae:

et

And really, Sir, this is by far the most consistent Scheme, as it is generally observed that in the whole Affair of the Authority of the Church, the *Romanists* are far more consistent, and make their Pretences hang better together than Protestants who aim at the same Thing, usually do. To require implicate Faith without Infallibility; and to require Obedience in Opposition to the Commands of God, unless God has left his Commands to their Discretion are equally Groundless and inconsistent Demands. Whether our Dissenters perceive the Consequence and admit it, I will not take upon me to say. But either they must renounce their Principles; or their Principles must necessarily lead them to the Consequence at length. For if a Thing that is in itself morally Evil becomes morally Good upon its being commanded, I need scarcely call it an Inference to say, that then the Commanders have a Power to change moral Evil into moral Good, to repeal the Laws of their Maker, and to counter-order God himself. Or else, that there is nothing fixed and unchangeable in Morality at all.

I hope, *Andropodius*, you are not this length yet in the System, and I take it to be sufficient for the Conviction of you or any that are reclaimable, to lay it open to your View, and to shew you that the Admission of your Principles must needs cast loose the whole Doctrine of Morality. And therefore I shall only, for the confutation of it, quote one small Passage of Mr. *Alfop*. His Antagonist Dr. *Goodman*, had said something like the first Reason of Dissent, tho' not near so strong. To which Mr. *Alfop* replies; "It seems a most horrid Thing to interpret Scriptures at this Rate; that I should be commanded to walk charitably, till I am commanded to walk uncharitably; and forbidden to destroy him for whom Christ died by my indifferent Things, till I am enjoined to destroy him. Not to wound weak Consciences, till I am commanded to wound them. Thus
"shall

et si aliud praeceperit Ecclesia, quam Christus, non Ecclesiae sed Christo obediendum esse. Certe in hoc est omnium praesumptionum initium, quando judicant particulares suum sensum in divinis praeceptis conformiorern, quam universae Ecclesiae.-----Dico nulla esse Christi Praecepta, nisi quae per Ecclesiam pro talibus accepta sint. Mutato Judicio Ecclesiae, mutatum est et Dei Judicium. *Cusan. ad Bobæm. Ep. 2.* Tu per obedientiam quam facis praeposito quem Ecclesia tollerat, decipi nequis, etiamsi praeceperit alia quam debuit. Quare sententia pastoris ligat te pro tua salute, propter bonum obedientiae; etiamsi injusta fuerit. Nam ad te non attinet cognoscere quod sententia sit injusta, nec conceditur tibi, ut non obedies, si tibi injusta videatur. Nulla enim esset obedientia, si in tuo arbitrio esset de sententia Pastoris judicare. Obedientia igitur irrationalis est consummata obedientia, et perfectissima: Scilicet quando obeditur sine inquisitione rationis, sicut *Jumentum* obedit Domino suo, &c. *Id. Excitatus, lib. 6.*

“ shall moral Precepts be avoided by *human positive Laws*,
 “ which cannot be superfed by the *divine positive Laws*. And
 “ if one may be thus enervated, the whole Decalogue had no
 “ firm Station. And thou shalt not make to thy self a graven
 “ Image, may be eluded by this, *till we be commanded by Autho-*
 “ *rity* *.

§ 6. AN. Sir, All that Collection that you have made from Papists, Infidels, and High Church of *England* Men signifies nothing to me. You will not pretend surely, that we carry the Point so far as they do. And tho' we did, do you think that I am to be bullied out of a truth, because many ill-disposed Men have maintained it likewise? The Church of *Rome* teaches the principal Articles of the Christian Religion; is this a sufficient Reason for me to deny the Incarnation, the Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ? What I insist upon is, that our Doctrine upon this Subject has always been the Doctrine of the Church of *Scotland*. Nay, not only so, Sir, but it is and must be the Doctrine of all Societies, who are for preserving any Order or Government among them. It is not peculiar to our ecclesiastical Constitution only, but is essentially necessary to the Being of all Constitutions, and Forms of Government whatever, whether ecclesiastical or civil. It is true; that it has been often and grossly abused, and the abuses of it have frequently, and sometimes very justly, excited in the Minds of Men, strong and rooted Prejudices both against the Doctrine itself, and the Defenders and Abettors of it. But tho' it may by some Men be run up too far in Principle, and grossly abused in Practice, it is however agreeable to the known Maxims of Government that have been always established among Mankind. And if I could see how Government could subsist upon any other Maxims, then Sir, but not till then, should I begin to listen to them.

T. I was not without some Hopes, *Andropodius*, that the bare pointing out the Consequences of your Doctrine, and shewing that it necessarily leads to the Destruction of God's Government, and the overturning of all Morality, would have been sufficient to have opened your Eyes. The Writers I have mentioned tho' they speak out more plainly than you do; yet they go no farther than your Principles will lead every one that thoroughly believes them, and admits them with all the Consequences that necessarily flow from them. I thought that this would have been enough to you: For pray, Sir, let us suppose that human Government should really suffer by a different Way of thinking (the contrary of which I hope to convince you of before we have done)

* *Melius Inquirendum*, p. 347.

done) which of the two think you deserves the Preference, the Authority of God or the Authority of Men? I really thought that the reasoning of the Apostles was unanswerable, and that they safely might (as they did) appeal to any who admitted the Authority of God at all, and allowed that any of his Commands were directed to, or binding upon Individuals: Whether God was not to be obeyed rather than Men? Let God be true and every Man a Liar. Let God be obeyed, come of Man what will, Sir. Granting your Consequences, even in all the extravagant and hyperbolical Terms in which you commonly chuse to express them, if there must be an End to the Government either of God or Men, which of them, Dear Sir, ought to end soonest? Shall there be so much concern for the Authority of Men, while that of God is allowed to have no farther Effect than according to the Pleasure of Men, who may be, and often have been his Enemies?

However, Sir, if this Argument has no Weight, and the Authority of Men must be supported, come of God's what will, let us proceed to consider the Matter more particularly. Only before we go any farther, let me advise you not to trust too much to the Authority of the Prefacer to the Reasons of Dissent. He affirms indeed that the Doctrine contained in them is agreeable to the known and established Maxims of Government, and particularly that it has always been the Doctrine of the Church of *Scotland*. But he could not have given a stronger evidence how superficial his Enquiries have been, and how little pains he has taken to consider this Subject. As for the Church of *Scotland*, the precise Question between us is decided so frequently, and in such explicate Terms, in our Confession of Faith, that one would think, those who have subscribed it, venture far enough when they contradict the Doctrine contained in it, tho' they should not impute to the Compilers of it a Doctrine which they seem to have had a Detestation of. What could be more express than their saying, that "God alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Commandments of Men, which are "in any Thing contrary to his Word, and that the requiring an "absolute and blind Obedience is to destroy Liberty of Conscience and Reason also.*" But not to repeat all the Passages to this Purpose which you will find collected in the Answers to these Reasons of Dissent, p. 38. I shall only add to what you have there, one more, which is of itself sufficient to decide the Question, It is in Chap. 31. §. 3. Where speaking of the Decisions of Synods and Councils, 'tis said, "Which Decrees and Deter-

"mi-

"minations, *N. B.* if consistent to the Word of God; are to be "received with Reverence and Submission." I would fain know, Sir, if the Dissenters had been to draw up their Creed about the Authority of the General Assembly whether you think they would have done it in the same Terms, and told us, that when the Assembly had received a Complaint of Mal-administration, for example in the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, and had authoritatively determined the same, it was only provided that the Determination was consonant to the Word of God, that the Presbytery was to receive it with Reverence and Submission. If I should explain what they call *Consonant* by being *not contrary*, you must own at least that such Explication is not necessary in order to render it more irreconcilable with your Doctrine. Nor indeed is it possible to reconcile with your Doctrine the Qualification, added to the Obedience that is due to Superiors both in the Confession of Faith, and Larger Catechism, *viz.* that it must be only in *lawful* Things. This is evidently adopting our Distinction upon this Subject, which you have rejected, and raised so loud a Cry against.

But with what Face, Sir, can any Body that has either read, or heard any Thing of our History impute such Doctrine as is contained in the Reasons of Dissent to the Church of *Scotland*? A Church that has been honoured by God in different Periods to testify against that very Doctrine even unto Blood? If our Forefathers from the Year 1596 to 1638, and from 1660 to 1688, had thought the Commandments of Men sufficient to supersede their private Judgments, there would not have been so many of them banished, imprisoned and otherways harassed as in the first Period, nor so much of their Blood spilt upon a Scaffold as in the second. Publick Regulations were then enacted by the highest Authority in *Scotland* both civil and ecclesiastick, which the best of our Forefathers at that time disapproved. But they were so far from thinking themselves bound to obey them, and when required to put them in Execution, that they chose rather to suffer the severest Tortures, and to seal their Testimony against them with the last Drop of their Blood.

AN. AY, but did they act such a disorderly and dishonest Part, while they continued in the Society, and reaped the Emoluments of it?

TH. In the second Period indeed, they were thrust out of it: But they continued in it, and reaped the Emoluments of it, as Mr. *Gillespie* did, till they were taken from them, and some of them, such as Mr. *Guthrie* in *Finwick* for several Years. They did not basely desert the Station in which God had placed them,

them, tho' they passively submitted to be driven out of it, till exorbitant Oppression, which makes wise Men mad, forced a few of them into Rebellion against the Opinion of the rest. As to the first Period, Sir, they kept their Stations and reaped the Emoluments of them for upwards of forty Years, such of them at least as were not banished or imprisoned. But what Sort of Obedience was given to the publick Regulations that were then enacted by Authority, I shall honestly tell you from *Calderwood*. When constant Moderators were appointed by the supreme Authority both in Church and State in the Year 1606, and all Synods and Presbyteries were charged under Pain of Rebellion to admit them: "Some, says the Historian, obeyed willingly; others yielded for Fear; some refused simpliciter; some took Instruments, that if the Person appointed should enter unto that Office, it was violent Dealing, and without their Consents." As for the Provincial Synods, none of them accepted the constant Moderator, but the Synod of *Angus* only. How the rest behaved you may judge from one Sample among others, viz. the Synod of *Perth*. At their Meeting in *April* 1607, Lord *Scoon* came with a Commission from the King, and threatened them in his Majesty's Name, if they would not accept of a constant Moderator: But notwithstanding all his Threats, their last Moderator Mr. *Row* took the Roll of the Synod in his own Hand, and when Lord *Scoon* attempted to take it from him, he held his Lordship with one Hand, and the Roll in the other, till he called over the Names of the Members, who chused their Moderator according to the Form and Order of the Church of *Scotland*. Upon this Lord *Scoon*, after having attempted in vain, by his own personal Strength and Authority, to break up the Meeting, being also Provost of the Town, called for the Baillies, and commanded them to ring the common Bell, and dismiss these Rebels. But the Baillies refused to obey him. However against the second Diet of the Synod, when the Members came to the Church they found the Doors shut, and tho' the Baillies offered to make patent Doors, the Ministers chose rather to meet at the South Door, in the midst of a great Concourse of People who accompanied them with Tears, and brought Tables and Seats for them. The Synod being constituted, they enquired what Presbyteries in their Bounds had accepted of constant Moderators, appointed by the Assembly at *Linlithgow*. Upon Enquiry it appeared that no Presbytery in the Bounds of that Synod had yielded up their Liberty of chusing their own Moderator, except the Presbytery of *Perth*, if even they could be said to have done it, who reported that their Moderator had entred the

Chair by Violence, as their Protestation taken in Presbytery did bear, and for having made no greater Resistance, they declared themselves willing to submit to Censure. The Synod made an Act, that every Presbytery at their first Meeting after the Synod should choose their own Moderator according to the common Order*. Many other Instances might easily be given of Disobedience in that Period, as I dare say you cannot but know. 'Tis true there have always been two Sorts of People in the Church of *Scotland*, some who approved, and some who disapproved of such Disobedience, the first of whom *Calderwood* usually calls *the sincerer Part*. Which of these the Prefacer means by the Church of *Scotland*, he himself best knows. In the mean Time, I can tell you, that the disobedient were most amply approved by the first free General Assembly which met in the Year 1638, at which Time it appeared by the most incontestable Evidences, that their Conduct was agreeable to the Sentiments of the greatest and best Part both of the Church and Nation.

AN. But does not the very mention of that Assembly, *Theodulus*, suggest to yourself, the proper Answer to what you are saying? viz. That the Assembly at *Linlithgow*, and other Assemblies during that Period, were of such a Constitution, that their Authority deserved no Regard. Accordingly the Assembly which met in the Year 1638, and which you yourself call the first free General Assembly, found all their Actings to be null and void. Now what Evidence can it be of disregard to Authority, to refuse Obedience to those who have no Authority?

TH. The Assemblies you speak of, Sir, were the only Assemblies they had during that Period. They were called, and countenanced by those who had then the highest Power, both civil and ecclesiastical in the Government of this Country. And they were so far submitted to, that, as the Brethren of *Fife* and *Perth* declare in their Testimony†, “the greatest Part of the Ministry were carried away with the Course of Conformity, and couching with *Iffachar* under the Burden.” And there was not a Power extending over the whole Church of *Scotland* then in Being, which did not concur in the enforcing of the Regulations that were so universally disapproved, and so openly disobeyed. But besides this, Sir, I have two Things farther to observe.

In the first Place, as we are now considering the general Question, what Sort of Obedience is due to Superiors of any Sort? An Obedience, as the Prefacer expresses it, that is not peculiar to our ecclesiastical Constitution only; but is essentially necessary
to

* *Calderwood Hist.* p. 552---572. † p. 15.

to the Being of all Constitutions, and Forms of Government whatever : So you will not refuse that many of the Regulations which met with such a Reception as I have mentioned, had the Authority of the civil Government. No Objection, I presume, lies against the Constitution of the King and Parliament, to whom Obedience is due from the Clergy as well as Laity. Whether this Obedience is in all Things lawful only, or in all Things, without Exception, whether lawful or unlawful, that would not justify a Rebellion, is the very Question between you and me. Now, abstracting from the Disobedience of our Forefathers to their ecclesiastical Superiors, did they not, in the most open Manner, avow Disobedience to an Authority which they were incontestibly subject to, when they apprehended any Interference between that and the Divine Authority? Did they not, oftner than once, take the most solemn Protestations against Acts of Parliament? And when Access to the Parliament-house was denied, did they not affix a Copy of their Protestation upon the Cross, and other publick Places, taking Instruments in the usual Manner, when the Act of Parliament was published? This was done by Commission from Presbyteries when Bishops were advanced to civil Dignities, and by Commission from a great Body of the Ministry convened at *Edinburgh*, when the Articles of *Perth* were ratified, and that after they were charged by Proclamation to depart out of the Town †. One would be almost tempted to think that this had been permitted by Providence on Purpose to shame them who should say that it had been always the Doctrine of the Church of *Scotland*, that private Judgment was superseded upon the enacting of any publick Regulation.

My second Observation, Sir, is this. Your Objection proceeds upon the Supposition, that it was the wrong Constitution of the Assemblies of that Period only, upon which the Disobedience of our Predecessors was grounded, and that the Matter of the Regulations which were enacted could not have justified their Disobedience, provided they had been enacted by a proper Authority. So that the Grievances then complained of behooved to have been actively complied with had they been enacted by a full and free Assembly. But you cannot surely be so much a Stranger to the Controversies of those Times as to pretend that this was really the Case; or to imagine that the then disobedient Sons of the Church (as they would be called were they now living) carried the Matter no higher than that comes to. The very Question between them and their Opponents was, Whither

† Id. p. 527. 770.---784.

the controverted Things were not fixed by Jesus Christ himself in such a Manner that no Power on Earth had Authority to alter them. The Assembly 1638 in their Act *December 5.* declare it as their Opinion, that the ancient and laudable Constitutions which had been altered not only, "Never have been, but "*N. B.* never can be lawfully repealed, but must stand in force." Not but that an Assembly of fallible Men whose Constitution could not be justly objected to, might, in fact, alter these Regulations. But such did they apprehend to be the *Jus Divinum* thereof, that a repeal of them by any Power upon Earth was esteemed null and of no Force.

AN. I am sure, *Theodulus*, if you'll allow the Assembly 1638 to speak the Sense of the Church of *Scotland*; you must give up this Pretence. For when did you ever hear of Church Authority being carried farther than they did? What if we had enacted, "That no sort of Person of whatsoever quality or Degree "be permitted to speak or write against the last Assembly or any "Act of it, and that under the Pain of incurring the Censures "of this Kirk." What a Cry would you have raised of Tyranny? and of restraining ministerial Freedom and Faithfulness? And yet this would have been no more than what that famous Assembly actually did.

TH. Sir, I will not pretend to vindicate all the actings of any Assembly of fallible Men. And I do not think it consistent with their acknowledging that they are so, to restrain others from pointing out their Faults and Failings. But at the same Time, I am persuaded that this Act of theirs has been misapprehended; and, tho' I will not altogether justify it, yet in the Light which I view it in, it does not appear to me at all Parallel to the last Assemblies enacting the same Thing. Let us but carry back our Views to their Time, and the peculiar Circumstances they found themselves, in. For a long Time preceeding, true Religion and the Professors of it, had been under the frowns of the Court. Those who were the properest Instruments for promoting serious Godliness were discouraged, and the Enemies of the true Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of this Church, Men who appeared to have no concern for the most important Interests of practical Christianity were supported, and their Authority and Projects forced upon the People in Oppositions to their declared Inclinations. At last the King split upon a Rock which, whatever Shipwracks may be discerned around it, have never yet been a sufficient warning to others to avoid it, when they find themselves sailing with the pleasant Gails of Authority. The very driving on his Projects with too high a Hand,
not

not only stoppt their Progress but overturned them at once, a general Revolt (which sooner or later will always be the Effect of forcing the universal Inclinations of a People by meer dint of Authority) extorted from the King an unwilling consent to the holding of a fair and free General Assembly. But as the King had not dropt his Project, when the Commissioner found that it was not in his Power to manage the Assembly, he withdrew the royal Countenance from them, in the King's Name, to sit any longer, and declared that any Thing done in the Assembly should be of no force, and should not bind any of his Majesty's Subjects. The next Day, viz. the 29th of *November*, a Proclamation was made at the Cross of *Glasgow*, the Town where they were sitting, inhibiting and discharging the Assembly, under the Pain of Treason, to continue their meeting, and declaring all and whatsoever they should happen to do, to be null, and of no force or Effect. In all this he acted according to his Instructions, and was supported in it by the Court. For by the Time that Orders could come from *London*, viz. on the 18th of *December* the very Day on which the Act of Assembly you mention was past, a Proclamation was made at *Edinburgh* by his Majesty's Command, condemning the General Assembly at *Glasgow* as an unlawful Meeting, and discharging all the Subjects, under the highest Pains, to acknowledge or give Obedience to their pretended Acts; declaring their present Meetings and Acts to be illegal and unwarrantable, and prohibiting Ministers or inferior Church Courts to give any Countenance or Approbation to them.

It was easy to foresee that all this would afford a strong Handle to those who were Enemies to the turn that Things were now taking. At the same Time, our Forefathers were not such Fools as to let the Opportunity which Providence had offered them, slip thro' their Hands. The King had consented to their meeting, and had called it by Proclamation. He had likewise consented to the Meeting of the Parliament, which in the Humour the Nation was then in, they had no Reason to doubt, would ratify and enforce with their Authority all the Proceedings of the Assembly. Upon their Proceeding, or not, depended, in a great Measure, the Success of the surprizing and important Revolution which was then so fairly begun, the promoting and countenancing of true serious Godliness, or its being continued under the former Discouragements. All who wished well to the Revival of real Practical Religion, they were pretty sure would support and countenance their Authority, and it was only the Malignants, as they were called, the profane Scorners of Seriousness and Devotion whose Opposition they had any Reason to be apprehensive

five of. I will by no Means say that this was the Case without any Exception. You know I have a Principle against allowing myself so much as to think so in any Case: But I dare say you are satisfied that it was so for the most Part. Their Enemies however had the Weight of the royal Authority on their Side, which they were disposed to make the best Advantage of. In this Situation the Assembly resolved to proceed without a Commissioner from the King, and in Opposition to his Proclamation, *i. e.* with a disputed Authority, which they were therefore under a singular Necessity of supporting by extraordinary Methods. And as it was of the highest Consequence to the Church and the Nation, to themselves and Posterity, that it should be maintained, they thought themselves in that peculiar Situation obliged to assert and enforce it under Pain of the Censures of the Kirk, which, in the Circumstances they were in, could upon this account scarcely be misapplied.

From this State of the Case it is easy to perceive that there can be no Parallel between their making such an Act, and the last Assemblies doing the same, whose Authority was not disputed; unless you think 'tis a disputing it to contend that 'tis inferior and subordinate to God's. Nor can this instance at all serve your Purpose, or bear an Application to the Question between you and me. Our Controversy is, whether the Authority of God does not to a Mans own Conscience supersede the highest Authority upon Earth, of what kind soever it be: The Question with them was, whether the Authority of a General Assembly lawfully constituted and called by the King himself, upon the urgent Demand of the whole Nation, might be superseded by the executive Part of the civil Government retracting what had been once conceded. The Question between us is about the active Execution of Orders, which is scrupled upon the Account of the Matter of them altogether, not because of the want of Authority in the Court that gave them: Whereas the Controversy with them was about a passive Submission to their Determinations, which was disputed because of an alleged Defect in their Constitution and Authority. In short, while they asserted the sufficiency of their own Authority, and maintained the Legality of their Constitution, they declared at the same Time, that there were some Things belonging to Church Order that were beyond the reach of all human Authority whatsoever, as I have already had Occasion to shew you.

Tho' this may be a sort of Degression, *Andropodius*, I think it not amiss to give you, upon this Occasion, a just View of that Act which has so often been thrown up to the Prejudice of that

Assembly: An Assembly which the Enemies of true Religion are glad to pick Faults with, and which has always been honoured and esteemed by the sincere Friends of Religion and Liberty, as consisting of true Patriots, and zealous Christians. But as to the precise Difference between you and me, it will require more Management than what is in the Power of Art to puzzle a Case that is so very plain. That Men who had maintained a forty Years incessant Struggle against Authority, for publick Regulations which they were at this very Moment asserting the inflexibility of, and are known to have insisted upon the *Jus Divinum* of in the highest Rigour, were for yielding them up to the Disposal of human Authority, and pleaded for an active Obedience in such a Case; is like Transubstantiation, Sir; it will not believe for us.

Let us consult one of the most eminent and esteemed Writers among them, and it will make us more sensible of their Judgment upon this Point. The Writer I mean is *Durham* in his Book on Scandal, to whom Mr. *Carstairs*, the Publisher, and one of the Author's Collegues, in the Preface to that Book, applies what was formerly said of *Gregory Nazianzen*, viz. "That he was of such Authority in the Greek Churches, that whosoever durst oppose his Testimony, was suspected to be an Heretick." There is one Point, which he insists upon in a great Variety of different Places thro' his 4th Part, which is upon scandalous Divisions, as diametrically opposite to your Doctrine as can be, namely, that the Authority of a Church Judicatory with us, tho' it were a general Council itself, depends upon the Matter of its Decisions more than upon its unexceptionable Constitution*.

And

* We may observe, that in the primitive Times there were diverse Schisms and Divisions concerning Synods and Government, yet we will find that these Contests and Divisions did flow from the Matter, and particular Acts and Actings thereof.----If the Matter was right and satisfying that was concluded by many Bishops and Churchmen, there was an acquiescing in the Authority thereof. If the matter was displeasing and hurtful, of whatever Form it was, and of whatever Number, its Authority was not much respected, because it consisted only in adding Weight to these Things, &c. *Durham on Scandal*, p. 332. When the Matter was sound and profitable, it was accepted, and the Synod was revered, though it hath had less Formality, and hath been of a fewer Number. So the Council of *Sardica*, *Laodicea*, and some particular provincial Synods have ever been of great Authority because of their Matter, when more numerous Synods with more Formalities have never been so accounted of, nor reckoned among the general Councils, although their Number hath been far greater than many of these other. 4. When they come to determine any Thing after the close of corrupt Synods, they do not usually sift the Constitution thereof, but examine and condemn the

And the same Author in the first Part of his Book peremptorily determines, that human Authority ought to be disobeyed, not only when the Thing commanded is sinful in itself, but even when it is such, as tho' indifferent in itself, may give Offence to others †.

Sir, the Church of *Scotland* has proceeded upon the same Principles since the Revolution. The very first Assembly that met after that Period, showed how little regard they thought due to a wrong Exercise of human Authority, by "declaring
" all Sentences past against any Ministers *hinc inde* by any Church
" Judicatory, upon the account of the late Differences among
Pref-

the Matter thereof, and do repeal their Sentences, and account them null from the Beginning; not because of questioning their Authority that did it, but because of their doing the same unjustly, as in the Cases of *Atbanasius*, *Eustachius*, *Chysofom*, and *Ignatius*, that followed him in the same See: All whose Depositions were accounted null, because of the unjust Violence that was used in them, *Id. ib. p. 374*. This was the Way that the Ancients took in the primitive Times, even when Synods in this Respect [*i. e.* as to their Constitution] might have been said to have been corrupted, when God gave Opportunity they set themselves to rectify the Matter, and to do upon it what was fit for the Good of the Church, without mentioning the Nullity of the Form thereof, or insisting thereupon. And indeed the doing otherways seems to lay too much Weight upon the Authority or Constitution of a Church Judicatory, as if when the same is every Way regular, it could add something, or ought to have Weight, where the Matter is not in itself approveable; which hath been eschewed by Orthodox Divines, both of old and late, who ever therefore looked most unto the Matter determined or decided. *Id. p. 373*.

† It may be further moved what is to be done when there seems to be an Opposition betwixt the Command of a Superior, and the eschewing of Offence, so that we must either disobey him, or give Offence in obeying, as suppose a Magistrate should command to preach upon some pretended holy Day: The Thing is lawful upon the Matter, but the doing of it is offensive, either by grieving many, or strengthening others in the esteeming somewhat of that Day? *Ans.* In that Case the Scandal is still active and given, and therefore no Command or Authority can warrant one in such a Deed: For as these two worthy Divines (*Ames* in his Cases of Conscience, *lib. 5. cap. 11.* and *Gillespie* in his Dispute of Ceremonies, Chap. 7. § 5.) observe, no Man can command either our Charity or our Consciences, or make up the Hazard of a given Offence; and therefore none can command us warrantably to hurt the spiritual Good of our Neighbour, that being contrary to the Command of Love that God hath laid on. And we may add, that an indifferent Action being involved with Offence, cannot but be in its practising sinful, as it is complexly considered, and therefore cannot be the Object of a Magistrates Command, more than an Action which is sinful in itself. On this Ground, many of the Saints in the last Persecution, did chuse rather to suffer Martyrdom, than to be constructed to have ceded, or delivered the Bible, and therefore they would not redeem their Life by giving of any Piece of Paper at the Command of the Officers, lest thereby they should have been by others interpreted to have given up their Bible.

It

“Presbyterians, from the Year 1650 till the Reintroduction of
 “Prelacy; to be of themselves void and null to all Effects and
 “Intents*” And the very Question, and Formula appointed
 by the Assembly 1711 to be answered and subscribed by Ministers
 and Probationers, which you seem to lay hold of as favouring
 absolute and implicate Obedience, if they be narrowly inspected
 and impartially considered, are evidently calculated, Sir, for the
 quite contrary purpose. As the word Obedience is not so much
 as mentioned, so any Thing that looks that way in these engage-
 ments is very general, only that we submit, and be subject, to
 the Judicatories of the Church. But the main Concern seems
 plainly to be for the Doctrine, Worship, Government, and Dis-
 cipline of the Church. These are what we promise to adhere
 to, and to the utmost of our Power, in our Station, to assert,
 maintain and defend, and never endeavour directly nor indirect-
 ly the Prejudice or Subversion of the same. Let any Body
 that will take the Trouble of looking into these Engagements,
 judge whether Obedience to Superiors, or Adherence to the Puri-
 ty of Religion as established in this Church, has the greatest Stress
 laid on them; or whether, if ever there was to be an Interference
 between them, which is far from being impossible, we would be
 bound by those Engagements to prefer the one or the other. Our
 Engagement to Obedience, if it were so termed, or Submission,
 as the Assembly has chosen to word it, must, in the Nature of the
 Thing, be only in Subordination to the other, and under a con-
 dition

It is to be remembered that we spake not of displeasing, seeing by a Superi-
 or's Command that may be done, but of scandalising, either by strengthening
 somewhat that is wrong, or seeming to do so, by wounding the Consciences
 of others, provoking them to judge us, or some such Way: And if it were
 not so, the three Children, *Dan* 3. might have escaped the Furnace; for
 to fall down at the King's Command was not simply sinful (and had they done
 that, no more had been called for) but to fall down at such a Time, in such
 Place, &c. had at least the Appearance of Evil, and therefore there was no
 room left for Obedience. And no Question, *Joabs* resisting, and in Part ne-
 glecting of *David's* Command for numbering the People was more approve-
 able than his Obedience; yet was the Thing lawful in itself; but consider-
 ing it as circumstantiate; it tended to foster *David's* Pride, and to be subserv-
 ient in that which brought on Wrath, therefore was not to be obeyed to the
 confirming of him in his Sin. The same also may be said when doing some-
 thing that is offensive may seem a Way to prevent a Cross; for active Of-
 fence being ever sinful in respect of the complex Case, it is not to be allowed
 whatever Peril follow, as we may see in *Daniel's* Case who would not stumble
 others by shutting his Window, altho' it hazarded his own Life, and the
 Welfare of the Hearers. And in this Case *Paul* saith, that it were better for
 him to die than that any should make his glorying void, or make him an Oc-
 casion for others to stumble upon. 1 Cor. 9. 15. &c. *Ibid.* p. 34.

* Act 13. Assembly 1690.

dition that is necessarily and evidently implied, as well as universally known and acknowledged, till of late, *i. e.* in all lawful Things: Whereas our Engagements to the present Purity of Religion are absolute and unconditional. They bind in all supposable Cases, and particularly even in Opposition to the other.

Let me suppose a Thing that has often happened in the Christian Church, and in the natural Course of Things, cannot fail to happen again, that there should be a corrupt Majority in our supreme Judicatory, who, regardless of their own solemn Engagements, should impose upon inferior Judicatories or particular Ministers what had an evident tendency directly or indirectly, if not to the Subversion, at least to the Prejudice, of either the Doctrine, the Worship, the Discipline, or the Government of this Church. Let me suppose too, that the Inferiors upon whom such command is imposed continue to have the same Views of that Doctrine, Worship, &c. that they professed to have in taking these Engagements upon them, *viz.* that they are founded upon the Word of God, and agreeable thereto. I ask now, not what the Authority of Jesus Christ requires of them in such a Case, but what they are bound to by these very Engagements. I never heard it alleged, that there is so much as any tacit Condition implied in our Promise to assert, maintain, and defend the Doctrine, &c. of this Church, and in our Promise never to do any Thing to the Prejudice of it. And till the Reasons of Dissent appeared I never saw it made a Question by any Presbyterian Writer, that there was a tacit Condition implied in our Promise of Subjection to Superiors upon Earth. I doubt much if you will take it upon you to say, that your Engagements to the Doctrine, Worship, &c. of this Church meant no more than till you was otherwise commanded by your Superiors. And for my Part, I will yet venture to say, that my "Engagement to Obedience and Submission" to the Judicatories of this Church was with the express Limitation of its being in the Lord, *i. e.* in such Cases only as I "judge not to be disagreeable to the Will of the Lord."

It is somewhat pleasant to observe the Triumph of the Publisher of the Reasons of Dissent from the Commission in March 1752, upon his finding out, "that this saving Clause of Limitation, on which he says, they lay so much Stress, is not contained in the very Bosom of our Formula and ministerial Engagements,"* while, at the same Time, he cannot deny, that 'tis contained in the Scripture. As if it was not at least as much for our Purpose to find it in the very Bosom of the Apostle Paul's Di-

* Note at the Bottom of Page 11.

Directions upon this Subject, as in any Words of human Composure. *Calvin* is not the only Interpreter who took this to be equivalent to its being contained in the very Bosom of the fifth Commandment †. The Restriction itself therefore he will not get rid of. And therefore, as is usual, when a Passage of Scripture stands in ones way, it is not the scriptural Restriction, but the Interpretation of it which he pretends to object against. Tho' if one may guess by the Joy it gives him to find it not in the Formula, he would have been content that it had not been in the Scripture either; especially as he does not so much as venture, upon the rejecting of one Interpretation, to substitute any other in the room of it. Well, since the Expression itself must be admitted with or without some sense, what is this Interpretation that he can use a little more freedom with? "That is, says he, (as they interpret it) in such Cases only as we judge not to be disagreeable to the Will of the Lord." Let me here again desire you, *Andropodius*, to observe, (as I am sure you do not sufficiently advert to it) what is this Writer's real Opinion upon this Subject. He rejects this Interpretation, you see, that we are to obey in such Cases only as we judge not to be disagreeable to the Will of the Lord. Consequently his Opinion is, that we ought to obey even in such Cases as we judge to be disagreeable to the Will of the Lord. Sir, it is not above two or three Years, since I would have thought it a sufficient Confutation of any Minister of the Church of *Scotland* to have shewed him that this might be deduced as a Consequence from any other Opinion which he maintained. And I would be extremely loath, I do assure you, to impute it to any Body against their Will. But what shall we say, when it is not only so openly and so expressly maintained, but when one Minister is already deposed, others suspended, and the rest threatened for denying it? An Opinion that till very lately would have been looked upon as a dead Weight, enough to sink any other connected with it. But if we must prove that an Egg is not an Elephant, there is no Help for it. Let us hear what is this Gentleman's Objection to the Interpretation. Why, says

† Ceterum ita limitatur patria potestas, ut Deus a quo pendet omnis cognitio, dominetur tam patribus quam filiis. Praesunt enim liberis parentes: verum sub summo Dei imperio. Itaque non simpliciter filios hortatur Paulus ut parentibus sint obsequentes, sed restrictione addita, In Domino: quo significat, si quid injuste Pater injungat, obsequium liberè negandum esse. Ferendus quidem est immodicus rigor, morositas, atque etiam saevitia; modo ne mortalis homo, impie exigendo quod fas non est, jus suum Deo eripere tentet. *Calvin, in Exod. xx. 12.*

says he, "According to their Interpretation, they might very safely have promised Obedience to any Power whatever." Now, pray Sir, can you who may happen to be more in this Gentleman's secrets than I am, tell me the meaning of this? For I profess it is quite beyond my Comprehension. I can safely promise this, and I am bound to do it, whether I promise it or not, to any Power whose Jurisdiction I am under. But whatever he might think it safe for him to do, I would think it very rash and very unsafe for me to promise any such Thing to a Power whose Jurisdiction I am not under. I am obliged by my Promise, for example, to supply any Vacancy within our own Bounds, when the Presbytery shall appoint me. But would it be safe for me to promise the same thing to the Presbytery of *Zetland*, or to the Bishop of *London*? My Servant to whom I have obliged myself to give Meat and Fee, may safely promise to obey all my lawful Commands. But I cannot see how it would be either just in you to demand or safe for him to promise as much to you, to whom he is under no Obligation. As the Writer does not seem to be a Fool, I cannot help suspecting that he has some Meaning, which I confess myself unable to dive into, and should be very glad if you would help me to find it out.

AN. I am really apprehensive that there are more Mistakes than one among you, and that both he Mistakes you and you Mistake him. If I might offer my Conjecture, I fancy it would tend to manifest both the strength of his Argument, and the Innocence of his Opinion. When you speak of obeying in all Things that are not disagreeable to the Will of God, I find your Meaning is, all Things that are not forbidden by God. But I suppose he apprehends your Meaning to be, only all Things that are already commanded by God. If this be the Case, as I shrewdly suspect it is, then you will be at no loss to perceive the Force of his Argument. For surely it would be of very little Significancy, and what might be safely promised to any Power whatever, to obey if it were in nothing else but what you are already under a previous Obligation to do, by the Command of God, whether it happened to be enforced by any new Injunction from inferior Powers or not.

TH. Possibly, Sir, that may be the Case. For my Part, I was not very forward in suspecting it; because if the Case were my own, I would rather chuse to be detected in having said something without any Meaning at all, than in opposing a Thing which I find in Experience there is no arguing against, without perpetually mistaking it or seeming to mistake it. To look as if you did not hear, after you have been told a Thing five hundred

dred Times, and when you come to argue against it, to be still shuffling in, by a sort of slight of Hand, something else in the Place of it, is not only a very low Piece of Artifice, but implies a kind of Consciouſness that you can find no Objection to the Thing itself, which yet you are resolved to oppose. I would not have said so much, Sir, if the Interpretation had been expressed in such ambiguous Terms as left any room for a Mistake that was not willful. But abstracting from all other Means he had of knowing the Sense of it, there is so great a Difference between being commanded by God, and not being disagreeable to his Will, that it is not easy to imagine, it was only heedlessness that confounded them.

But after all, Sir, are you still of Opinion that the Doctrine contained in the Reasons of Dissent has always been the Doctrine of the Church of *Scotland*?

AN. I shall not say, *Theodulus*, that either I or the Dissenters are so well acquainted with Mr. *Durham* and his Contemporaries as you seem to be. But I doubt if these Fathers will be admitted by us as proper Judges of this Controversy. I frankly own to you between ourselves, that I am not without Apprehensions, that there may have been too much Ground given to our Enemies for the Reproaches they have sometimes cast upon our Predecessors, of betraying too frequently something of a seditious and rebellious Spirit. But I am confident that our Doctrine is agreeable to the known and established Maxims of Government among Writers of a superior Character and more established Reputation in the World, who have studied, and understood the Nature, and first Principles of Society. And I believe you will find it not easy to bring Authorities from any where else in support of your Plan of Government.

TH. And I am confident, Sir, that you would not have said so, had you consulted such Writers, instead of trusting to the Air of Assurance with which some young Lawyers assert this in the General Assembly. Several of them have set their Names to the Reasons of Dissent, and because they profess to have studied the Law, and in their Assertions of this Kind make use of the strongest Terms, and the highest Words, and deliver them with the utmost Degree of Confidence in their Looks and Gestures, you are apt to take it all for granted. And yet after all, if there be not some Misapprehension of one anothers Opinions, which is a Thing that very usually happens, I make no Scruple to say of such sort of Assertions, *cujus contrarium est verum*. Remember that the Doctrine which is said to be agreeable to the known and established Maxims of Government, and essentially necessary
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to the Being of all Constitutions, is, that active and passive Obedience must be of the very same Extent, or that in all Cases where the Relation of Government and Subject is supposed to continue, the Commands of Rulers are to be executed without Reserve, and the Subject is not only to suffer but likewise to do whatever his Superiors are pleased to order. This gives the Subject, you see, no Judgment of Discretion about the Morality of the Action. You allow him indeed to judge how far it is consistent with the Subsistence of Society, which is a Thing that Inferiors are often unqualified for; but you do not allow him to judge how far it is consistent with the moral Law, which every Man ought to be qualified for deciding. Now Sir, this precise Question, I could appeal to any Writer upon the Subject what ever. I appeal it even to *Hobbs* himself, and if you can bear it in the same Breath, (I assure you I am very far from putting the two Men upon a level) I appeal it to your own Mr *Hutcheson's* Introduction to moral Philosophy, tho' I believe he has laid the Foundation of your Scheme there; in B. 2. Ch. 16. where he extends the acknowledged mutability of Laws relating to temporal Goods, to other more inflexible Branches of Morality. However it seldom happens, that publick Teachers venture so far in such dangerous Doctrine as their Scholars are apt to do after them; (for which Reason I wish you were as cautious about loosing a Pin in the Authority of God as you seem to be about loosing one in the Authority of Men.) Accordingly when speaking of the Duties of Subjects, he not only expressly distinguishes between Cases where it is lawful for Subjects to resist their Governors, and Cases where it is lawful to disobey them, but he gives several Instances which no Body, I believe, will pretend are sufficient Grounds of Rebellion, in which he declares we are under no Obligation to Obedience*.

But whatever may have been said, Sir, since Morality has been founded on the Instincts, or Senses, as you affect to call them, of degenerate, corrupt Sinners; should we go back to the Times when it was allowed to rest on its only solid Basis, the immutable Nature of Things, it would be more difficult to make

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* These are the Obligations of Subjects toward their Governors: First, they are sacredly bound to obey all their *N. B.* just Laws and Commands. --- Where we are commanded to do any Act directly irreverend and impious toward God, or contrary to the perfect Rights of others; or where the Matter commanded was not committed to the Power of the Commander; we are under no Obligation to Obedience. Nay, 'tis often highly honourable to endure rather any Punishment than submit to a Precedent that may be ruinous to our Country. We shewed above in what Cases it is lawful for Subjects to resist their Governors. *Hutch, Introd, &c, B. 3. ch. 8. § 12.*

a Choice among so innumerable a Multitude, than to find a Variety of Testimonies against you. And tho' I shall not trouble you with above two or three, if you insist on it, you may have them by Hundreds when you please; nay, you would save me the Trouble if you would be at the Pains to consult any Divine that writes upon the fifth Command. I shall only, for the Sake of the Reasonings of some Writers, mention a few. I hope you allow *Grotius* to have understood something of the Nature and first Principles of Society.

AN. I dare say *Grotius* does not allow Subjects the Liberty that you would indulge them in.

TH. I mention him because he does the very Thing that you put me upon, *i. e.* he not only gives us his own opinion, but he has collected the Testimonies of other eminent Authors upon this precise Point. There is nothing wherein Obedience has been thought more necessary, and of greater Importance, than in the Case of Soldiers and Executioners, and accordingly these are the Cases, you know which you have most frequently recourse to in your arguments with us. Yet in both these Cases *Grotius* is of Opinion, that it would be a Sin for a Subject to obey if he be not satisfied of the Justice of the Cause. He tells us that Subjects become guilty of the Sin of the Rulers, not only if they give their Consent, but if they do any Thing that is sinful in Obedience to their Rulers; particularly, that if Subjects are commanded to fight in a Cause that appears to them unjust, they ought not to do it, and for this he not only quotes the Apostle's Maxim, that we ought to obey God rather than Men, and that obedience is to be only in the Lord, but he adduces a great Multitude of Testimonies both of Pagan and Christian Writers in support of the said Opinion. Nay, he thinks it the safer side to disobey, even when the Justice of the Cause appears to the Subject to be doubtful, and expressly declares it to be the Duty of a good Magistrate not to impose the Execution of such Orders upon Subjects that have a Scruple about the lawfulness of them *.

I

* The Passage is too long to be all inserted. We have in the Text and Notes, the Opinions of *Plato, Euripides, Seneca, Pliny, Gellius, Quintilian, Josephus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustin, Jerom.* and others. The following Hints will give the Reader a Taste of the whole. A summa Potestate culpa transibit in subditos, si in crimen subditi consenserint, aut si quid fecerint summae potestatis imperio, aut suasu, quod facere sine facinore non poterant. *Grot. de jure Belli ac Pacis, lib. 2. cap. 21. § 7.* At si edicatur ipsis ut militent, quod fieri solet, siquidem constat ipsis injustam esse Belli causam, abstinere omnino debent. Deo potius obediendum quam hominibus, non Apostoli tantum dixerunt, sed et Socrates: et apud

I wish, *Andropodius*, that our young Lawyers who mislead you, would study a little Divinity, and read the Scripture but half as much as *Grotius* did, and thereby get a deeper Impression upon their Minds of the incomparable Superiority of God's Laws above all the Laws of his Creatures. As for Divines, it would be endless to bring all the Testimonies that might be collected from Writers of that Character. But as we have now to do with Churchmen, about Church Authority, a Specimen of what is commonly taught by them on this Subject cannot be amiss. I believe, *Andropodius*, you are beginning to have a better Opinion of *Calvin* than you once had.

AN. I have upon your Recommendation made some use of his Commentaries, and I must own, that I find him one of the most sensible Writers I ever met with.

TH.

magistros Hebraeorum extat sententia, indicans Regi contra Dei legem quid praecipiente, prorsus non parendum. Polycarpi jamjam morituri dictum extat; "Didicimus impertis ac potestatibus a Deo ordinatis exhibere honorem quem par est, quique salutem nostram non impedit." Et Paulus Apostolus; "Filii, inquit, obedite Parentibus in Domino, id enim aequum est." Ad quem locum Hieronymus: "Peccatum filiorum est non obedire parentibus, et quia poterant Parentes aliquid imperare perversum, adjunxit in Domino." Et de servis addit: "Cum dominus carnis a domino Spiritus diversum imperat, non est obediendum." Idem alibi: "In illis tantum debent Dominis et Parentibus esse subiecti quae contra Dei mandatum non sunt." Nam et idem ille Apostolus dixerat sui quemque operis mercedem reportaturum, sive liberum sive servum. Tertullianus vero: "Satis praescriptum habemus, in omni obsequio esse nos oportere, secundum Apostoli praeceptum, subditos magistratibus, principibus et potestatibus; sed intra limites Disciplinae," &c. *Id. ib. lib. 2. cap. 26. § 3.* Quod si dubitet, res licita necne, eritne quiescendum an parendum? Parendum plerique censent: nec obitare illud laudatum, quod dubites ne feceris: Quia qui contemplativè dubitat potest activo judicio non dubitare: Credere enim potest in redubia obsequendum superiori.---Contraria sententia stabiliri potest hac ratione, quod qui dubitat contemplativè debeat judicio activo eligere partem tutiorem. Est autem pars tutior, abstinere bello.---Neque obstat quod ex altera parte periculum est inobedientiae. Nam cum utrumque incertum sit (nam si injustum est bellum, jam in ejus vitiatione nihil est inobedientiae) caret peccato, quod ex duobus minus est. Inobedientia autem in ejusmodi rebus suapte natura minus malum est quam Homicidium, praesertim multorum innocentium. Narrant veteres cum Mercurius ob Argum interfectum accusatus, Jovis mandato se defendisset, non tamen ausos Deos eum absolvere.---Quin probabile est etiam carnifici qui damnatum occisurus est, haecenus, aut quod quaestioni et actis interfuerit, aut ex rei confessione cognita esse debere causae merita, ut satis ei constet mortem ab eo commeritam; idque nonnullis in locis observatur. Nec aliud spectat lex Hebraea, cum ad lapidandum eum qui damnatus est testes vult praecire populo. Quod si subditorum animis per causae expositionem satis nequeat fieri, omnino officium erit boni magistratus tributa ipsis potius extraordinaria imperare quam operam militarem: praesertim ubi non defuturi sunt alii qui militent, &c. *Id. ibid. lib. 2. cap. 26. § 4. et 5.*

TH. I always rank him, you know, among the very first rate Divines, and I make no Question but the more you are acquainted with him, the more you will be of my Opinion. I have had already Occasion to mention his Opinion about the Obedience due to Superiours. And shall only upon this Occasion observe how strongly, according to his usual Way, he expresses the universal Sense he thought mankind had of the Superiority of Conscience to all the Decisions of Men. For of this, he tells us in his Institutions, there was still a glimmering Spark remaining, even when the World was overspread with the thickest darkness of Ignorance *. So much more powerful, it seems, is *Hobbsism* than Popery itself, in obliterating our regard to the Supreme Authority of God.

I think, *Andropodius*, I have heard you expressing an esteem for the writings of *Warrenfels*.

AN. Very possibly. I think his Treatise *de Logomachiis Eruditorum* a very useful and well executed Performance. And any of his Theological Tracts that I have perused pleased me much.

TH. Did you ever read his Tract *de jure magistratus in Conscientias*?

AN. I dare say I have; tho' I don't remember much about it.

TH. Indeed it seems so. Nay, you seem to have forgotten every Thing that has fallen in your Way upon this Subject. Otherwise I am sure no Body could have led you to say that the Doctrine contained in the Reasons of Dissent is agreeable to the commonly established Maxims of Government. And particularly *Warrenfels* in that Treatise expressly declares that even in the Case of an erroneous Conscience it would be a high Degree of Wickedness for any Man to act contrary to the Dictates of it, tho' commanded to do so by the highest Authority upon Earth. And that it would be no less Wickedness to make any such use of Authority. For the Proof of which he adduces the Text in *Acts 4. 19.* that has been already mentioned †. I

* Quum totus orbis densissima ignorantiae caligine obvolutus esset, haec tamen exigua lucis scintilla residua mansit, ut humanis omnibus judiciis superiorem esse hominis conscientiam agnoscerent. *Calv. Instit. lib. 4. cap. 10. § 5.*

† Errat, fateor; sed quamdiu ita errat, revera id facere sine scelere non potest. Vere enim Deum offendit, quisquis facit id, quo Deum putat offendere. Quando itaque hominem, dum in ista persuasionem haeret, ad id faciendum cogis: quod sine impietate fieri nequit. Et hoc est illud ipsum argumentum, quo utuntur Apostoli adversus eos qui minis ipsos impedire volebant, quo minus resurrectionem Christi predicarent: Justumne sit, inquiunt, apud Deum vobis potius auscultare, quam Deo, judicate. Ubi notandum,

I believe, *Andropodius*, tho' you have been led to despise one of the best Things Dr. *Clark* has done, I mean his laying the Foundations of natural Religion deep, and settling Morality upon its proper Basis, the Nature of Things; yet you will not refuse that he is a Writer of Character.

AN. Tho' I do not go in to all his Notions; yet I frankly own him to be a clear headed, distinct Writer.

TH. I wish you would read a Passage in one of his Sermons, where upon the Occasion of those universal Terms wherein Obedience to Superiors is enjoined in Scripture, such as, *in all Things, in every Thing, &c.* he with his usual Clearness and Strength of reasoning, shows from the Nature of the Thing, that they must necessarily be taken in a limited Sense, in a Sense consistent with the superior Regard due to the Authority of God †.

The famous Mr. *Claude* in his celebrated Defence of the Reformation, is frequently obliged to illustrate this Point. He argues from the necessity that often occurs in human Governments,

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hoc Apostolos urgere, apud eos, quibus Christus crucifixus scandalum erat. Non potuissent igitur ipsos in hac causa iudices constituere, nisi hoc verbis istis dicere voluissent: Vos qui doctrinam de resurrectione Jesu fabulam imo scandalosam creditis, mandatis, ne eam annunciemus: at contrarium persuasum sumus mandare Deum. Ipsi iudicate, quid nobis, dum in hac persuasionem sumus, faciendum sit. Vobisne parendum sit, qui nos tacere jubetis; an Deo, quem credimus nos jubere loqui? Non usque eo vos impios credimus, ut a nobis exigatis, ut Deum in vestri gratiam offendamus, et mandata vestra mandatis divinis anteponamus. *Werenf. Opuscula, p. 50.*

† Reason, and the Nature of Things, and the general Use of all Language sheweth, that in these and all other the like Expressions, the Phrase *in every Thing, and in all Things*, must necessarily be understood to mean only, in all Things just, in all Things lawful, in all Things that are honest and fit to be done. In human Writings, these general Manners of Expression, arising from the known and vulgar use of Language, are never misunderstood: and therefore to misunderstand them in the sacred Books only, is mere Perverseness. As therefore in all Writings, so in Scripture likewise; the true, the natural, and evident meaning of such Phrases as these, in all Things, in every Thing, and the like; is not what the Word, *all*, suggests in its single Signification; but what the vulgar Sense of it is in such Expressions and Sentences. When we are taught that the Commands of God, or the Laws of Truth and Right are to be obeyed in all Things; the Nature of the Thing, not the Force of the single Words, shows that the Obedience is to be universal and without Exception. In other Cases where the very same Words are used; (as in the Text, *Servants obey your Masters in all Things*;) the Nature of the Thing there likewise no less plainly shows that this Obedience in all Things is to be limited by its Consistency with the Commands of any Superior Master, either on Earth, or in Heaven.---- These Things are, in their own Nature, exceeding evident: and yet where Party, or Interest, or Controversy is concerned, 'tis wonderful to what a Degree Men have sometimes, even in so plain a Case, imposed upon the ignorant and upon the learned too. *Clark's Sermon, on Col. iii. 20.---Vol. 3.*

to disobey inferior Rulers out of Loyalty to the supreme, to the same necessity that may be incumbent on us to disobey any human Government in Obedience to God himself *. He expressly declares an absolute and unlimited Obedience to be due to God alone, and that any Church which insists upon it, encroaches upon the Rights of the supreme Being †. And this Argument is carried so far by M. *la Placette*, that he makes no Scruple to accuse those who yield an implicate Obedience to Men as being guilty of real Idolatry, and of offering to a Creature the very highest and most excellent Sacrifice that God himself is capable of receiving from us ‡.

This

* Il peut mesme quelquefois arriver dans la Societé civile qu'au lieu d'exécuter les ordonnances des Supérieurs, on sera obligé à s'y opposer formellement, et à y résister, comme quand les Estates d'une Province, ou un Gouverneur ordonnent des choses qui intéressent l'obéissance qu'on doit au Souverain, et qui engagent les Peuples dans la Rebellion. Alors, non seulement nous pouvons juger nos Juges d'un jugement particulier; mais nostre jugement particulier deviendra general, et public, mille fois plus fort qu'un celuy des Juges, quand mesme il ne seroit accompagné d'aucune formalité; car les formalitez n'y font rien, quand il s'agit de la fidelité que nous devons à notre Prince; Il n'y a ni respect de Magistrats, ni consideration d'ordre, ni autorité de Gouverneurs, qui nous en doive détourner, tout cede à ce grand et capital devoir. Il en est de mesme dans la societé religieuse, Dieu et nostre salut vont avant toutes choses, et s'il arrive que les Pasteurs, ou dans leur chaires, ou dans leurs Livres, ou dans leurs conciles nous veüillent plonger dans erreurs, et dans une culte qui deshonore Dieu, et qui corrompt son Christianisme, non seulement on peut les juger d'un jugement particulier; mais on doit mesme tâcher de rendre ce jugement particulier aussi public, et aussi general qu'il se pourra; et quoy qu'il en soit, ne s'aloigner point de la fidelité que nous devons tous à Dieu. Les inconveniens qui naissent de cette conduite doivent estre imputez non aux particuliers qui ne font que ce qu'ils sont obligez de faire; mais aux Pasteurs qui ont abusé de leurs charges, et perverty l'ordre et la naturelle destination de leur ministère. *Def. de la Reform. P. 1. Ch. 9.*

† En effect, une obéissance absolüe et une entière resignation à la conduite d'autrui, pour les choses qui regardent la foy et la conscience, est un devoir que nous ne pouvons rendre legitimement qu'à Dieu, qui est la première verité, le premiere principe de la droiture. *Ib. Chap. 8.*

‡ C'est là aussi ce qui fait voir qu'il n'y a que Dieu seul à qui on le doive. Cet honneur est trop grand pour être deféré innocemment à des creatures. La soumission aveugle ne peut avoir aucune autre objet que la volonté de Dieu, parce qu'en effect il n'y a que cette volonté qui soit droite necessairement et essentiellement. Celle du plus éclairé et du plus raisonnable de tous les hommes peut se tromper, et commander des choses qui ne laisseront pas d'être injustes en-elles mêmes, et contraires à la volonté de Dieu, quoi qu'elles lui paroissent plénes de justice. Ainsi il ne nous est jamais permis d'obeir à veuglement et sans examen à aucune homme. Le faire seroit une veritable idolatrie. En effet ce n'est pas une moindre idolatrie d'obeir à un homme sans examen, ou de croire sans discussion ce qu'il dit que de l'adorer, parce

This Author, Sir, spent almost the whole of a long and a useful Life in illustrating the Christian Morality, and thereby in some Measure, wiped off the Reproach from the Protestant Churches, that this Branch of Religion, however important, has not been so much cultivated among them as in the Church of *Rome*. Indeed the practice of auricular Confession that obtains amongst the *Romanists* and the Competition for Business of that sort among the Regulars of that Communion has occasioned a greater Multitude of Casuists, and a greater Subtily of Discussion and Decision in the Particularities of Casuistry, than can ever be expected among us. But all who are acquainted with *Placette's* writings must be sensible of the useful assistance he has furnished us with upon this Subject, and of his Qualifications for the Province he undertook, particularly by a careful Search into what either Lawyers or Divines had written that could give him any Assistance. Now this celebrated Divine, Sir, has formally handled the very Question that is in dispute between us. And if ever you read his Book upon Conscience you may remember that he has as formally and expressly decided it on our Side*. As this is the Subject of the 9th Chapter of his Book, considered in general as to all Superiors. So in the following Chapter he considers it more particularly as to ecclesiastical Superiors, to whose Re-

qu'en effet la foi et l'obeissance aveugles sont deux honneurs qui ne sont deus qu'à la premiere verité et à la premiere autorité. Ce sont là par conséquent des honneurs qui ne peuvent être deférés innocemment aux plus excellentes des creatures. L'obeissance aveugle est une espece de sacrifice, ou pour mieux dire c'est de tous les sacrifices le plus excellent, et le plus digne d'être offert à Dieu. Ceux de la loi ne consistoient qu'à lui immoler quelque bête. Ceux de l'Evangile lui offrent pour la plupart quelque chose de plus precieux. Nous lui consacrons nos biens par l'aumône, nos plaisirs par la temperance, nos ressentimens par le pardon des injures, nôtre vie par le martyre, nôtre raison par la foi. Mais par l'obeissance nous lui sacrifions à' ordinaire ces mêmes choses, et avec elles, nôtre liberté, le plus grand peut être, et le plus precieux de nos avantages. Un tel sacrifice ne doit il pas être réservé à Dieu seul, et peut on l'offrir à des hommes sans idolatrie? *Plac. Essais de Morale. Vol. 3. Disc. 2. § 8.*

* Il y a donc deux sortes de regles de la conscience. Il y a premiere ment une regle primitive, originelle, independante, qui nous oblige par elle même, et par sa propre autorité. Telle est la volonté de Dieu. Il y a d'ailleurs des regles derivees, et dependantes de la premiere. Telle est d'un côté la volonté de ceux à qui Dieu nous a commandé d'obeir et de l'autre l'engagement ou nous entrons par nos paroles ou par nos actions. Il paroît que les regles de ce dernier ordre dependent de la premiere, parce que toutes les fois que les fois que les commandemens des hommes, ou nos propres engagements, sont contraires à la volonté de Dieu, et nous portent à faire des choses qui lui déplaisent, ils cessent d'être valides et obligatoires. *Plac. de Consc. Liv. 1. Ch. 4.*

Est on tenu d'obeir à toute sorte de loix que des souverains legitimes peuvent

Regulations when they do not consist in directly enforcing the Laws of Christ, he, with all Protestant Writers who have hitherto been reckoned Orthodox in the Church of *Scotland*, assigns a less Degree of Authority than he does to the Laws of the civil Magistrate. But as this is an Advantage which our Cause stands in no need of: We are now willing as the Prefacer to consider it upon the footing of all Constitutions whatever, whether civil or ecclesiastical.

Mr *Richard Baxter* is another Protestant writer that has dealt pretty deep in Casuistry. You know, *Andropodius*, I am one of those that endeavour to promote a Taste for his Writings, which I am glad to find upon the growing hand. No worse a Judge than Dr. *Barrow* said of them "His practical writings were never mended, and his controversial ones seldom confuted." And Bp. *Wilkins*: "That he had cultivated every Subject he handled." Whoever will consult his Christian Directory will be sensible that it was not without good Reason that he was so much consulted, as he was in his Life time, about Cases of Conscience. In that Book, he has Occasion sometimes to touch upon this Point, but not as a Case of Conscience that he supposed any Body would need a Resolution of. He takes it for granted that he would not be a Man; nay, he scarcely allows him, Sir, to be a Beast who should call it in question. He supposes, however, our Doctrine to be made, by some Sticklers for arbitrary Government (who were in his Opinion, it seems, worse than Brutes) an Objection against the Christian Religion. And his Answer is, that 'tis not only the Christian Religion, but all Religion that teaches so, and must teach so, while God is allowed to have any Regard at all paid to him by Men *. And elsewhere he asserts it

vent imposer ? Pour moi, je n'en doute pas, et en effet les passages que j'ai produits dans le chapitre precedent nous ordonnent universellement et sans exceptions de nous soumettre aux puissances superieures. Il y a en a une cependant qu'il faut sous-entendre, parce qu'en effet elle est exprimée clairement et formellement en d'autres endroits. C'est qu'on doit obeir, a moins que la loi civile, ou la commandement du Prince, ou du magistrat inferieur, ne nous oblige a faire des choses contraires a la volonte de Dieu. Car dans cette supposition, il n'y a point de difficulte qu'on ne soit tenu de desobeir, suivant la maxime des Saints Apôtres, qui lors que le Synedrion leur devoit de prêcher, repondirent avec une Sainte vigueur Jugés vous memes, &c. *Act. iv. 19. Plac. Ib. Ch. 9.*

* *Objec. 3.* Christianity teacheth Men to obey the Scripture before their Governors, and to obey no Law that is contrary to the Bible, &c.

Answer. The Sum of all this Objection is, that there is a God. For if that be not denied, no Man can deny that he is the universal Governor of the World; and that he hath his proper Laws and Judgment, and Rewards and Pu-

it to be a fact universally true (which is more then a bare Opinion) that "they that are absolutely subjected to God, will obey" none against him, whatever it cost them." After this I need scarcely add, that he resolves the Case of Soldiers in the same manner that *Grotius* does *. But what need I mention particular Passages from him or any of the *English* Dissenters, whose very Denomination takes its rise from this single Principle? And when upwards of 2000 Ministers were ejected by the *Bartholomew* Act upon this very Score? And when 'tis so well known how far Mr. *Baxter* particularly carried this Point (with the Concurrence and Approbation of the rest of them) at the *Savoy* Conference which preceded that Act?

When I mention that famous Conference at the *Savoy*, between the most eminent Divines then in *England*, both Conformists and Nonconformists, I cannot but observe that the Bishops and other conforming Divines, who were never accused, I believe, of having yeilded too far upon that Occasion, and who are well known to have been high enough in their Principles, even they, Sir, never thought of carrying the Matter so far, as it is

Punishment, or that Magistrates are his Ministers, and have no Power but from him, and consequently, that the Commands, and Threats, and Promises of God, are a thousand fold more to be regarded, than those of Men! He is a Beast and not a Man that feareth not God more than Man, and that feareth not Hell more than bodily Sufferings. *Baxter's Christian Directory, Part 4. Ch. 3. §. 81.*

Object. But this, [*viz.* that Obedience to Magistrates is God's Command] is still with Exception, if it be not in Things forbidden of God? And the Subjects are made Judges whether it be so or no?

Answer. And wo to that Man that grudgeth that God must be obeyed before him! And would be himself a God to be obeyed in Things which God is against? The Subjects are made no publick Judges, but private Discerners of their Duties: And so you make them yourselves: Or else they must not judge whether the King or an Usurper were to be obeyed; or whether the Word of a King or of a Constable, if they be contradictory, is to be preferred. To judge what we must choose or refuse is proper to a rational Creature: Even Brutes themselves will do something like it by Instinct of Nature, and will not do all Things accordingly to your Will: You would have us obey a Justice of Peace no farther than our Loyalty to the King will give leave: And therefore there is greater Reason that we should obey the higher Powers no further than our Loyalty to God will give leave. *Ib. §. 85.*

* If it be, [*i. e.* If the Cause which a Soldier is commanded to fight in be unlawful, and the Evil of it be to him discernable by just Means] I am not able, for my Part, to justify him from the Sin, if he do it, no more than to have justified the three Witnesses, *Dan. iii.* if they had bowed down to the golden Image, or *Dan. vi.* if he had forborn Prayer, or the Apostles, if they had forborn Preaching, or the Soldiers for apprehending and crucifying Christ, when their Superiors command them. For God is first to be obeyed and feared. *Ib. P. 4. Ch. 7. §. 2.*

is now done amongst us. They yeilded that an Act commanded by lawful Authority may be sinful; nay, they yeilded, that an Act in itself lawful, when commanded by lawful Authority, may become sinful thro' circumstances whence directly or by Accident any Sin is consequent, which the Commander ought to provide against †. And indeed it is not only the Dissenters in England, but such as have been most remarkable for their Adherence to the established Government both in Church and State, that have vented Maxims very different from what you seem to fancy are the established ones. I might amongst others mention the ever memorable, as he is usually called, Mr. *Hales* of *Eaton**, a Man remarkable for his Patience under Sufferings, which 'tis a shame that ever a Man of his Character was exposed to. This, Sir, I am not ashamed to say, let who will have been the Authors of them.

AN. Sir, you need not take up any more of our Time with your Authorities. You have already been rather better than your word.

TH. What say you then, *Andropodius*, to those that have been alledged?

AN. I will not pretend to say, *Theodulus*, that they have made no Impression upon me. I stopt you, not because I am unwilling to hear what others have said upon the Subject, but because

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† When the Episcopal Divines were the Opponents they brought an Argument of which this was the major Proposition: *That Command which commandeth only an Act in itself lawful is not sinful.* This Mr. *Baxter* denied. The Opponents backed it with another Syllogism, of which this was the Major: *That Command which commandeth an Act in itself lawful, and no other Act or Circumstance unlawful, is sinful.* This also Mr. *Baxter* denied; giving this double Reason: Both because that may be accidentally a Sin, which is not so in itself, and may be unlawfully commanded, tho' that Accident be not in the Command: And also because it may be commanded under an unjust Penalty. The Opponents therefore urged farther, thus: *That Command which commandeth an Act in itself lawful, and no other Act whereby any unjust Penalty is enjoined, nor any Circumstance whence directly or per Accident any Sin is consequent which the Commander ought to provide against, is not sinful.* Mr. *Baxter* still persisted in his Denial, and gave this Reason: Because the first Act commanded may be accidentally unlawful, and be commanded by an unjust Penalty. tho' no other Act or Circumstance be such, &c. *Calamy's Abridgement of Baxter's Life, Chap. 8.*

* Where the Cause of Schism is necessary, there not he that separates, but he that is the Cause of Separation is the Schismatick. Where the Occasion of Separation is unnecessary, neither Side can be excused from guilt of Schism. But who shall be the Judge? That is a Point of great Difficulty, because it carries Fire in the Tail of it, for it brings with it a Piece of Doctrine which is seldom pleasing to Superiors. You shall find that all Schisms have crept

I began to grow sensible how Divines usually handle this Question, the Impression of which was, in a great Measure, worn out of my Mind. And I shall frankly own to you a Suspicion which your Testimonies have begot in me, that the high Words we throw out against our Opposers do help to deceive ourselves. It is commonly said that a Man may, by repeating a Falshood frequently, be brought at last to believe it himself, tho, he was at first sensible it was false. If there be any ground for this, how much more easy is it for some of us who do not enquire very deep into these Matters, and often have Occasion to hear the strongest Assertions in the most decisive Tone, from Persons we have a Regard for, to grow extremely positive; nay, really to be firmly persuaded in our own Minds that Things are as we and they have Occasion so frequently to affirm? And in this unsuspected Persuasion, what wonder, if it should at least slip from us in to Print? I have however been casting about in my own mind, what the Prefacer or any of our Friends might object against your Testimonies, and I can think but of these three Things. Either first, that there is nothing of all this contrary to our Doctrine, because whenever the supreme Authority in any Society is interposed, the Command of God requires us to obey it. Or secondly, that when a Society commands any Thing

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into the Church by one of these three Ways; either upon Matter of Fact, or upon Matter of Opinion, or Point of Ambition. For the first, I call that Matter of Fact, when something is required to be done by us, which either we know or strongly suspect to be unlawful. [After illustrating this from the old Controversy about *Easter*, he adds] Here I cannot see but all the World were Schismatics, excepting only that we charitably suppose to excuse them from it, that all Parties did what they did out of Conscience. A thing which befell them by the Ignorance, for I will not say the Malice of their Guides, and that thro' the just Judgment of God, because thro' Sloth and blind Obedience, Men examined not the Things they were taught, but like Beasts of Burden patiently couched down, and indifferently underwent all whatsoever their Superiors laid upon them.--- Nothing can be a just Cause of refusing Communion in Schism that concerns Fact, but only to require the Execution of some unlawful or suspected Act. For not only in Reason, but in Religion too, that Maxim admits of no Release *Cautissimi cujusque preceptum, quod dubites, ne feceris*: That whatsoever you doubt of, that you in no Case do.--- Then of Schism from Opinion.--- If the Fathers and special Guides of the Church would be a little sparing in incumbering Churches with Superfluities, or not over rigid either in reviving obsolete Customs, or imposing new: There would be far less Cause of Schism or Superstition; and all the inconvenience likely to insue would be but this, that they should in so doing yield a little to the Imbecillity of their Inferiors, a Thing which St. Paul would never have refused to do. It is alike unlawful to make Profession of known or suspected falshood as to put in Practice unlawful or suspected Actions. *Hale's Treatise of Schism.*

contrary to the Authority of God, it ought to be overturned. Or thirdly, That in such a Case, we ought to leave the Society. I am persuaded, Sir, none of us will assert that where there is an Interference between the Authority of God and that of Men, the last is to be preferred; and therefore, I doubt not, but they will admit the most of what is said by the Writers you mention, and will reconcile it with our Doctrine one of these three ways. For my Part, I am sensible that the first is untenable, and that the Authors you have mentioned would not have put such Cases, if they had considered the Thing as impossible. Neither will I pretend to take Refuge in the second. For I shall readily own, that tho' it were in my Power, it would be a Sin for me to rebel every Time that an unjust Command is laid upon me. Besides, I am sensible, that however lawful the Expedient were supposed to be, it would not always be in my Power to have Recourse to it. But if both the Authority of God, and the Authority of our earthly Superiors must be maintained, what say you to the last Expedient? God must be obeyed, to be sure: But his Vicegerents must not be disobeyed. We cannot withdraw ourselves from under the Authority of the supreme Being; but we may separate from any Society on Earth; and therefore when they require of us a Thing that God forbids, there is no other Help for it, but that we quietly withdraw from under an Authority, which we cannot submit to without displeasing God. And accordingly, Sir, this is the Expedient that we generally recommend to scrupulous Consciences.

TH. I know it is, Sir, and not without a Sneer sometimes at a Conscience that can scruple at any Thing imposed upon it. But for that very Reason, *Andropodius*, because 'tis an expedient so much recommended, either in Earnest, or by Way of Banter, I propose to consider it particularly. And if you would have a little Patience till we get at it, we may then have an Opportunity to weigh what can be said for such an Expedient. In the mean Time, perhaps you'll find it equally obnoxious to the Inconveniences you have mentioned, as the other Expedients which you have for these Reasons rejected. And I think the Dissenters themselves do not recommend it in civil Society. The Example of the *French* Protestants, as well as others, is an Instance that it would be itself a Disobedience to our civil Superiors. But taking it in any View; besides that it can easily be shewn to be, in many Cases, neither lawful, nor practicable, it is sufficient to our present Purpose, with a View to the Authorities that have been alledged, that 'tis none of the Expedients which the Writers upon this Subject usually recommend as necessary for keep-

ing up the Authority of Rulers, all the Passages that have been quoted apparently relating to such Authority as we are supposed still to continue subject to.

§ 8. AN. It may be so, Sir. But tho' we should give up this Point of Authority, I dare say, *Theodulus*, one who pretends to your Freedom of Thought, will not plume yourself much upon so inconsiderable an Advantage. A Thing may be true tho' all the Authors you have mentioned, and a hundred others which you have mentioned, and a hundred others which you might possibly add to them, should assert the contrary; and a Thing may be false which they maintain. I do not refuse that you and they together have staggered me a little. But tho' I am not quite so confident as I once was, I am not without Apprehensions that your Doctrine, if it was universally received, would be attended with very bad Consequences upon Government. In short, if I was thoroughly persuaded of it, I would advise both the Parliament and the General Assembly never to meet again. All Societies ought to dissolve, and every Man should return to a State of Nature.

TH. I am not at all surpris'd, *Andropodius*, at your Tenaciousness in adhering to an Opinion which you had so deeply imbibed. The Heat that commonly arises out of Contention and Opposition lays our Minds open like as much Wax to receive the deeper Impression, especially of those Things that are then driven into it by the repeated and hearty Strokes of Party Violence. But pray, Sir, do but apply to yourself the Observation that you have just now made to me, and suppose it at least as possible, for some of your young Friends to be in an Error, as I shall grant you the very best of human Writers may be. But there is a certain Authority, Sir, which I am not ready to yield up, and which I hope you'll submit the Decision of the Question to, *viz.* the Authority of the holy Scripture. And if once we had examined the Light which it affords us upon the main Point, I shall not refuse to hear all the Objections that occur to you from the Hurt you seem still to be apprehensive that human Authority may sustain. What I call the main Point is, the establishing the supreme Authority of God, not only absolutely but comparatively. And I do not think, as long as you express such a Concern for human Authority in this Comparison, that you have yet a right View of the Matter. I am sure, Sir, if you would but consider whose Authority I am pleading for, you would not suffer any other to enter into Competition with it. The Authority of God wherever it is duly established, like the Sun when it rises, makes all other Authority as the twinkling Stars, to vanish before it

it into nothing at all. 'Tis an Observation of *Placette*, when showing the Necessity of a superlative Love to God, that 'tis essential to the Truth and Sincerity of all the Virtues that terminate on God, that there be in them a Preference of God to every Thing else whatsoever, without which they not only fall short of what they should be, but are utterly unacceptable. Would that be a true Faith, for Example, that gave so little, (tho' some) Credit to the Testimony of God, as to be ready to believe the contrary upon the Word of some knowing or learned Man, for whom one had a great Regard, in Opposition thereto? or that should lay greater Strefs upon the Merit of some Saint than upon the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ? What sort of Trust in God would that be, that should reckon more upon the Assistance of an Arm of Flesh than upon the Power of Almighty God? Would that be a right Devotion, where not only the same, but an higher Degree of Worship was paid to Creatures than to God himself? What would you think of the Fear of God in that Man who stood in greater awe of some powerful Creature than of God, and was habitually disposed to Risk the eternal Displeasure of his great Judge, in order to avoid the Wrath of a Man? Would that be a right Love to God, that should, in a calm and deliberate Comparison and Choice, really prefer some created Excellence to the Source and Standard of all Perfection? And in fine, what would you say of the Obedience of that Man, that was ready to disobey God, in Obedience to a mortal Superior, commanding what God forbids*? I do not at all decline the Force of your Objection. If we be spared, we shall give it a thorough Consideration. But I own, I am sorry to see you lay so much Strefs upon it. Was there a thousand Times more in it than there is, a right View of God's Authority would absolutely annihilate it, and make you quite ashamed of insisting on it. For as long as human Authority is allowed any Weight at all, in Opposition to the Divine; nay, if they be but laid in the Balance together, the Divine Authority is out of its Place, God is dethroned, whoever may be admitted to fill his Room?

AN. I beseech you, *Theodulus*, do not shew the Thing to me any longer in this Light. It quite shocks me. I am confident, you have not the least Suspicion, that if I considered the two Authorities as standing in Opposition to one another, I would make the least Hesitation which of them to prefer. I see plainly there is no supporting of human Authority in all Instances, without supposing in all Instances, a Concurrence of the Divine Authority.

* Que droit on de l'obeissance d'un homme qui seroit toujours prêt a desobeir à Dieu pour obeir à un maitre mortel qui lui commanderoit ce que Dieu defend? *Placette Essai de Moralle, Vol. 2. Disc. 5.*

thority with it. What you have alledged from the 4th and 5th Chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, I will not deny has made an Impression on me, as it seems to be evidently supposed there by the Apostles that there may be an Interference between the Authority of God and that of Men. But if this is the only Passage of Scripture you build upon, your Proof from thence seems to be but scrimp. If you have any Thing else to alledge out of the Scripture, as I thought you was promising, I shall be very willing to hear it. For I assure you, that is an Authority which I am by no Means to decline.

TH. The truth is, Sir, what we maintain is not so much an Article of revealed, as of natural Religion. The Question is, as Mr. *Baxter* observes, evidently reduced to this: Whether there be a God at all. For if there be, in the Sense of Christians, there can be no Question whether he is to be obeyed rather than Men. I say, Sir, in the Sense of Christians: For the greatest Distress the Infidels of late have brought us under, is owing to their retaining the Names of God and Virtue, &c. to which they have affixed quite new Ideas, or rather which they have artfully supplanted of any Idea that ever was affixed to them, and have thereby convinced me that their Quarrel is not so much with revealed as with natural Religion itself. By this Means it is, that they have led many an honest but unguarded Christian quite off his Feet, and involved him, without his adverting to it, in some of the most pernicious Principles of Infidelity. I wish there was but one Example of this in the Clergy of the Church of *Scotland*. If ever I shall have an Opportunity of a serious Conversation with you about a late Book which I have had Occasion to mention already, I may then perhaps Point out more of them. But I cannot help looking on the present question as a fruit of the same tree.

Owen's *Truth and Innocence vindicated*, p. 67. in Answer to *Parker's ecclesiastical Polity*, a Book written with the same View and upon the same Principles with the Reasons of Dissent from the Commission, has the following Passages.

"I am afraid more of those who under Pretence of sober Reason, do vent and maintain Opinions and Principles that have a direct Tendency to give an open Admission unto Atheism in the Minds of Men than of such Fooleries. When others Fury and raving Cruelties succeeded not, he alone prevailed, *qui solus accessit sobrius ad perdendam remp.* One Principle contended for as rational and true, which if admitted will insensibly seduce the Mind unto, and justify a Practice ending in Atheism, is more to be feared than ten thousand Jest and Scoffs against Religion, which methinks, amongst Men of any tolerable Sobriety should easily

easily be buried under Contempt and Scorn. And our Author may do well to consider whether he hath not, unwillingly I presume, in some Instances, so expressed and demeaned himself, as to give no small Advantage to those corrupt Inclinations unto Atheism, which abound in the Hearts of Men; are not Men taught here to keep the Liberty of their Minds and Judgments to themselves, whilst they practise that which they approve not, nor can do so; which is directly to act against the Light and Conviction of Conscience? And yet an Associate of his in his present design, in a *modest and free Conference*, tells us, that there is "Not a wider Step to Atheism than to do any Thing against Conscience," and informs his Friend, that "Dissent out of Grounds that appear to any founded on the Will of God, is Conscience." But against such a Conscience, the Light and Judgment, and Conviction of it, are Men here taught to practise, and thereby in the Judgment of that Author are instructed unto Atheism. And indeed if once Men find themselves at Liberty to practise contrary to what is prescribed unto them in the Name and Authority of God, as all Things are which Conscience requires, it is not long that they will retain any regard for him, or Reverence unto him. It hath hitherto been the Judgment of all who have enquired into these Things, that the great concern of the Glory of God in the World, the Interest of Kings and Rulers, of all Governments whatever, the good and Welfare of private Persons, lies in nothing more, than in preserving Conscience from being debauched in the conducting Principles of it; and in keeping up its due respect to the immediate Sovereignty of God over it in all Things. Neither ever was there a more horrid Attempt upon the Truth of the Gospel, all common Morality, and the good of Mankind, than that which some of late Years or Ages have been engaged in, by suggesting in their Casuistical Writings, such Principles for the Guidance of the Consciences of Men, as in sundry particular Instances might set them free, as to Practice, from the direct and immediately influencing Authority of God in his Word. And yet I doubt not, but it may be made evident, that all their Principles in Conjunction are scarce of so pernicious a Tendency as this one general Theorem, That Men may lawfully act in the Worship of God, or otherwise, against the Light, Dictates, or Convictions of their own Consciences. Exempt Conscience from an absolute, immediate, entire, universal Dependence on the Authority, Will, and Judgment of God, according to what Conceptions it hath of them, and you disturb the whole Harmony of divine Providence in the Government of the World, and break the first Link of that great Chain, whereon all Religion and Government in the World do depend."

What

What we assert is so essential a Principle of natural Religion that we are not to look for a formal Revelation of it in the Scripture, where it is however always taken for granted. And of this, Sir, there is a plentiful Abundance of Examples to be produced. In the first Place, *Andropodius*, is it never supposed in the Scriptures that good Men are liable to Persecution? Is it represented there think you, as a Piece of Folly or Wickedness, to suffer ourselves ever to be exposed to it?

AN. Persecution? Why do you ask me such a Question? When the Scripture is so full of Examples, of Praises, of Precepts, of Threatenings, of Promises and Encouragements to incite us to it? And when the Title of Martyr is become one of the most glorious that a Christian is capable of? Does not our Saviour pronounce a peculiar Blessing on them who are persecuted for Righteousness sake? And promise them the Kingdom of Heaven? * Does not he forwarn them that they would be delivered up to Councils and scourged in Synagogues, and that they should be brought before Governors and Kings for his sake? Does he not expressly require them, not to fear them who kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul: But rather to fear him who is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell? †

TH. The Apostle *Peter*, you may remember, joins both the Precept and the Encouragement together. *But and if ye suffer, says he, for Righteousness Sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your Hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every Man that asketh you a Reason of the Hope that is in you with Meekness and Fear: Having a good Conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil Doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse you of your good Conversation in Christ. For it is better if the Will of God be so, that ye suffer for Well-doing than for Evil-doing ‡.* Accordingly the Apostles not only suffered a great deal of Persecution, but they gloried in it. Particularly the Apostle *Paul*, that he was in Stripes above Measure, in Prisons more frequent, in Death oft. *Of the Jews, says he, five Times received I forty Stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with Rods, once was I stoned ||.* Nay he took pleasure, he tells us, in Reproaches, in Persecutions, in Distresses for Christ's sake *. And again we find him putting *Timothy* in mind of the Persecutions, Afflictions, which, says he, came unto me at Antioch,

* Mat. v. 10, 11, 12. † Mat. x. 17, 18, 28. ‡ 1 Pet. iii. 14---17.
|| 2 Cor. xi. 23---25. * 2 Cor. xii. 10.

tiech, at Iconium, at Lystra; what Persecutions I endured: But out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, adds he, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution †. And the same Apostle gives it as a noble Character of the Old Testament Worthies whom he proposes as Examples for our Imitation, and expressly asserts it to be an Effect of their Faith, that they had Trial of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, yea moreover of Bonds and Imprisonments. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the Sword: They wandered about in Sheep Skins, being destitute, afflicted tormented, (of whom the World was not worthy) they wandered in Deserts and in Mountains, and in Dens and Caves of the Earth ‡.

AN. You may save your self the trouble Sir, of any more Quotations of that sort. It is a Point which, you may assure yourself, I will never deny. I must either never have read the Scriptures or not believed them, if I have the least Doubt of it; nor so much as ever dipt into the History of the Church, if I be ignorant that the very best and holiest Saints have been thus used. But pray what is all this to the Purpose? do we deny that Christians must suffer Persecution if it pleases God to arm their Adversaries with Power to inflict it?

TH. I make no Question, *Andropodius*, that you would submit to it, if ever the Commission of what appeared to you to be a Sin was the only Condition of avoiding it. But then you would plainly act contrary to your present Principles, and would be obliged, Sir, to throw up that concern for the Magistrates Authority which you still seem to retain. You are not yet initiated, I see, in all the Mysteries of your Sect, nor led throw all the Consequences of their Doctrine. But if you'll consult the Head of it, Mr. *Hobbs*, you'll find him not so shy in admitting the consequences, who is sufficiently handled for it by Dr. *Tillotson* ||. And I believe you will allow, that the famous Vicar of

† 2 Tim. iii. 11, 12. ‡ Heb. xi. 36----38.

|| The Author of the Book called the *Leviathan* tells us, That we are not only not bound to confess Christ, but we are obliged to deny him in Case the Magistrate requireth us so to do: His Words are; "What if the Sovereign forbid us to believe in Christ?" He answers, "Such forbidding is of no Effect, because Belief and Unbelief never follow Mens Commands. But what (says he) if we be commanded by our lawful Prince to say with our Tongues we believe not; must we obey such Commands?" To this he answers, "That Profession with the Tongue is but an external Thing, and no more than any other Gesture, whereby we signify our Obedience, and wherein a Christian, holding firmly in his Heart the Faith of Christ, hath the

of *Bray* is not the only Clergyman that can carry your Principles thro' all their Consequences. Let me only ask you, How those who sign the Reasons of Dissent can ever be exposed to Persecution upon the Principles which they have so openly avowed? Who is it that can kill the Body? that can scourge, imprison, confiscate, depose? &c. Are they not those with whom the Society has thought fit to entrust the legislative Power? But if the

"the same Liberty which the Prophet *Elisba* allowed to *Naaman*. But what "then (says he) shall I answer to our Saviour, saying, *Whosoever denieth me "before Men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven?*" His Answer is, "This we may say, that whatsoever a Subject is compelled to "in Obedience to his Sovereign, and does it not according to his own Mind, "but the Law of his Country, the Action is not his, but his Sovereigns; "nor is it he that in this Case denies Christ before Men, but his Governors "and the Laws of his Country."

But can any Man, that in good Earnest pays any Degree of Reverence to our blessed Saviour and his Religion, think to baffle such plain Words by so frivolous an Answer? There is no Man doubts but if the Magistrate should command Men to deny Christ, he would be guilty of a great Sin in so doing: But if we must obey God rather than Men, and every Man must give an Account of himself to God; how will this excuse him that denies Christ, or breaks any other Command of God upon the Command of the Magistrate? And to put the Matter out of all doubt, that our Saviour forbids all that will be his Disciples upon Pain of Damnation, to deny him, tho' the Magistrate should command them to do so, it is very observable, that in that very Place where he speaks of confessing or denying him before Men, he puts this very Case of their being brought before Kings and Governors for confessing him, *Mat. x. 17. Beware (says he) of Men, for they will deliver you up to Councils, and they will scourge you in their Synagogues, and ye shall be brought before Governors and Kings for my Sake, for a Testimony against them and the Gentiles.* But what Testimony would this be against them, if Christians were bound to deny Christ at their Command? But our Saviour goes on, and tells them how they ought to demean themselves, when they were brought before Kings and Governors, *Verse 19. But when they shall deliver you up, take ye no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that very Hour what you shall speak.* But what need of any such extraordinary Assistance in the Case, if they had nothing to do but to deny him, when they were required by the Magistrate to do it? And then (proceeding in the same Discourse) he bids them, *Ver. 28. Not to fear them that can kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do; that is, not to deny him for fear of any temporal Punishment, or Suffering the Magistrate could inflict upon them; but to fear and obey him who can destroy Body and Soul in Hell.* And upon this Discourse our Saviour concludes, *Ver. 32, 33. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before Men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven: but whosoever shall deny me before Men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.* And now can any Thing be plainer than that our Saviour requires his Disciples to make Confession of him before Kings and Governors, and not to deny him for fear of any Thing which they can do to them? But let us enquire a little farther, and see how the Apostles, who received this Precept from our Saviour him-

self,

the Dissenters are resolved to regard their Judgment, in all Cases, as absolute and final, with Respect to their own Practice, or in any Sense that can serve the Purpose of their Argument; If the enacting of any Regulation by the supreme Power shall always so far supersede the private Judgment of the Dissenters, as that they shall obey it, however disapproved, and put it in execution too, if required, Pray, Sir, how can they ever be exposed to Persecution? To Cruelty indeed, and unreasonable barbarous Usage they may. But if no Compliance is wanting on their Part, that is demanded by the Tyrant, it would, I presume, be changing the meaning of Words to call this Persecution in the Sense we are now speaking of. I know, Sir, that this is the way of the World. As there are but few Men who do really prefer their spiritual to their temporal Welfare, the greatest Part of Mankind do in fact behave agreeably to these Maxims. And, in order to cover such a cowardly Behaviour from the Contempt it deserves, some Men, less honest than ingenious, endeavour to colour it over with false Reasoning, as if all the blame lay at the Magistrates Door. But as you have already owned, that the Christian Religion abhors such Reasonings, How do you reconcile its Doctrine with that of the Dissenters? The single Exception with which they qualify their Obedience, *viz.* dissolving the Society, will not serve their turn here. For surely Martyrdom and Rebellion are very different Things, and are far from being animated by the same Spirit: Besides that the Histories either of the Bible or of the Church do by no Means favour this Expedient.

AN.

self, did understand it. *Acts* iv. 14. We find *Peter* and *John* summoned before the Jewish Magistrates, who strictly commanded them *not to speak at all, nor teach in the Name of Jesus*. But *Peter* and *John* answered and said unto them, *Whether it be right in the Sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye*. And when they still persisted in their Course, notwithstanding the Command of the Magistrate, and were called again before the Council, *Chap* v. 28. And the High Priest asked them, saying, *Did we not straitly command you, that you should not teach in this Name? and behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your Doctrine: They return them again the same Answer, Ver. 29. Then Peter and the other Apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than Men*.

And let any Man now judge whether our Saviour did not oblige Men to confess him even before Magistrates, and to obey him rather than Men. And indeed how can any Man in Reason think, that the great King and Governor of the World should invest any Man with a Power to controul his Authority, and to oblige Men to disobey and renounce him, *by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree Judgment*? This is a Thing so unreasonable that it can hardly be imagined that any Thing but downright Malice against God and Religion could prompt any Man to advance such an Assertion. *Tillotson's Sermon on Matth. xvi. 24.*

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AN. There is no doubt, Sir, but our Religion belongs to God alone, and is quite beyond the Reach of the Magistrate's Authority. And therefore if among the Regulations enacted by the Rulers of any Society, this should happen to have a Place, that any of the Subjects should change their Religion, it must be excepted to be sure. And I think you might have taken it for granted, in common Charity to any Christian, not to say, Minister or Elder, that does not expressly refuse to admit such an Exception, that it is always to be understood, whatever general Assertions, they may throw out upon the Subject. For we make a great Difference between changing our Religion, which is beyond the Cognisance, and without the Jurisdiction, of any human Government, and complying with such external Regulations as our Superiors may think necessary for the good Order of human Society, tho' they do not appear in the same Light to ourselves.

TA. I do not at all wonder, *Andropodius*, that you and your Friends love upon this Occasion, to make use of very general and indefinite Terms. For 'tis the constant Retreat, where Error finds any fort of Shelter. (*Dolus latet in generalibus*, you know is a Maxim established, and confirmed by constant Experience.) Drag her but out of this Covert where she shuns the Light, and her Deformity immediately strikes every Eye to which it is then exposed. These general Terms of Regulation, and changing ones Religion, are extremely convenient, not for the Perception and Admission of Truth, as an acceptable Guest, but for keeping off its importunate and unseasonable Approaches, when you are not disposed to give it a welcome Reception. And the Convenience of them for this Purpose lies in the Variety of Senses or Ideas that may be included under them. They may serve to convey, or at least to conceal and protect from an unwary Observer a very wrong Sense. And yet if this wrong Sense should happen to be pursued into its Closet Retreat, the general Words can easily shake themselves loose of it. You must therefore give me leave to make two or three Observations upon your Defence.

In the first Place, If by changing your Religion, you mean, only altering the inward Persuasion of your own Mind in Relation to Doctrine which you assent to the Truth of; the adhering to your Religion in this Sense is equally common to the basest Poltron of a Coward, with the stoutest and most resolute Confessor. To boast of this would be just as idle as if a white Man should brag that all the fiercest Threats of a Tyrant were not able to change his Skin into the Colour of a Negro: Punishment

ment being as ineffectual in the one Case as in the other ; if not more so, as the only Effect it can have upon the inward Persuasion of our Minds, must be to increase our Prejudices against a Doctrine for the Sake of which we are so hardly used, unless it could be supposed that the breaking of our Heads would let in some Light upon our Understandings, or that the flame of our Bodies might help our Minds to see more clearly. I dare say, *Andropodius*, if you took any Time, when you was at the Assembly, to consider what Effect your Threatenings could have upon the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, you could not be so sanguine as to expect it would be any Alteration of the inward Persuasion of their Minds, after they had withstood the reasonings of the Dissenters, for I did not hear that the Assembly condescended to try that sort of Discipline upon them. They might have been influenced thereby to do a Thing which they owned they thought was wrong, they might have been moved to say that their Minds were changed, and that they now thought it right. But surely you could not imagine that the taking their Stipends from them, or threatening to do so, could have the least Degree of Influence in making them really think so, and altering the inward Persuasion of their Minds.

Secondly, The Expression, complying with external Regulations, needs to be explained. For if under that be included every outward Action that Rulers may insist upon, not excepting the saying of any Words which they may happen to dictate, I shall only refer you to Dr. *Tillotson* who has sufficiently shown against Mr. *Hobbs* how inconsistent this is with what our Saviour demands. I acknowledge to you, *Andropodius*, that the Freedom which is pled for being used with Truth by some *Shaftsburian* Divines, and the Doctrine of Subscriptions being nothing but *vincula pacis*, together with the Revival of an exploded error in Morality, that the End sanctifies the Means, under a new Shape which you call the good of the whole, to our partial and limited Views of which the sacredest Rules of Morality are made to yield, might tempt an imperfect Charity to suspect that some of those Gentlemen may be capable of carrying the Matter that length, especially when we are so often told, almost in the very Words of Mr. *Hobbs*, that an Action which is done in Obedience to Rulers, is not the Action of him that does it, but of him that commanded it. Without insisting however on such gross Compliances, what if the Rulers, like some of the Heathen Persecutors should require only the delivering a Piece of Paper, or the scattering a few Grains of Incense ? These are Regulations that have been thought necessary for the good Order of Society. Must they

they be complied with too by those who disapprove them? Other Regulations likewise have been thought necessary by Rulers, that were not in themselves essentially or directly immoral, and implied no denial of Religion, but were known however to have a Tendency to its ruin. Must they likewise be complied with by those who disapprove them? *Julian* the Apostate, for example, thought it a Regulation necessary for the good Order of Society that no Christian should teach a School. *Lewis XIV* of *France*, thought it a Regulation necessary for the good of Society, that no Protestant Students of Divinity should study in foreign Universities, even after their own were suppressed; that none of the richer Protestant Churches should assist the poorer Ones in maintaining a Minister; that no Protestant should be a Tutor or Guardian to a Minor, that so all the Children of Protestants whose Parents died when they were young might be educated by Jesuits; with a great many other Regulations of the same sort*, which however innocently they might have been complied with in certain Circumstances, would, in their Situation, if punctually and universally obeyed, been the certain ruin of the Protestant Religion. Must these Regulations be all exactly observed? The late King *James* thought it a Regulation necessary for the good Order of Society that a Declaration of his which was intended for the ruin of the Protestant Religion should be published by the Protestant Clergy. Must they who saw him going on in a Course of such Things, have an active Hand in carrying it on themselves? Let me add, Sir, to all these, and numberless other Instances that might be given: You and others in this Church think it a Regulation necessary for the good Order of Society that Presentees be settled over the Belly of the most reluctant Parishes. As we make no Question but you think so, we are willing to put the most favourable Construction upon both your enacting and executing such Regulations. But must those who see a Course of such Regulations actually ruining practical Religion, and that the executing them, at least by those who have often been obliged publicly to own their having these Views of the Matter, would effectually disable them to be useful, join with an active Hand in carrying on this Course? In short, Sir, the obeying of Regulations enacted by our Superiors which we disapprove, is so indefinite a Manner of Speaking, that I cannot regard it in any other Light than as a Fort which you shut yourself up in. What would you think of a General who after he had challenged his Enemy to fair Combat in the open Field, should,

* See Quicks Synodicon, *Intrad.* p. 119.

should, upon their Appearance, hide himself with all his Troops in the strongest Fortrels that he had, nay, in an enchanted Castle, where after all the Trenches were levelled and the Works blown up, there is no Enemy to be seen? For so I imagine you would give me the slip by the various meaning of your Words, if I should take your disapproved Regulations in the only Sense that I oppose. Come out of your Intrenchments then, Sir. A fair Adversary in a good Cause would not skulk in so cowardly a Manner. If it be only Truth you conceal under these general Expressions, I'll warrant you, Sir, it can bear the Light. Tell us plainly whether you think yourself obliged to comply with all external Regulations that may be enacted by Superiors. If you do not, then you and I are agreed, and you might just as well have held your Tongue about Regulations altogether, as to any Progress you have made in the Argument. If you do, then I beseech you, Sir, how firmly so ever you believe the Truth in your Heart, how can you ever be exposed to any Persecution.

In the third Place, when you say, it ought to be supposed you would not change your Religion at the command of a Superior, I want to know how far you extend this? Particularly whether under this general Phrase, (by which may be meant only your not turning Mahometan, Idolater, &c.) you include all the particular Parts of which your Religion consists. For if you mean, (as I hope you do, and as I dare say you would practise, if it were brought to a trial) that you would not do any Thing whatsoever, tho' required under the severest Penalties, and by the highest authority, that appeared to you to be inconsistent with any Branch of Religion; what else is it, Sir, but this very Thing that we maintain, and that you pretend to dispute with us? 'Tis but seldom that Persecuters require People to change their Religion altogether, and it would be a rare Thing to be exposed to Persecution, if one might at all comply with regulations that were inconsistent with any Part of it. The Soldiers that offered Incense at *Julian's* Statue did not change their Religion: Nor did the Emperor expect or require that they should. Yet when they came to understand that it was inconsistent with Christianity, they went and offered their Lives to expiate the crime they had committed. The supreme Power of the *Medes* and *Persians* did not require of *Daniel* to change his Religion. Yet he chose to run the Risk of the severest Punishment, rather than comply with but a temporary Regulation, that appeared to him inconsistent with any of its Precepts. The *Sanhedrim* did not require of the Apostles to renounce their Religion, or so much as to say, that Christ was not risen; yet they exposed themselves to Persecution,

tion, rather than not do a Thing which their Religion obliged them to do. King *James* the VI. and his Parliaments did not require our Ancestors to change their Religion; yet they chose rather to be banished, imprisoned, &c. than to comply with some external Regulations, which appeared to them inconsistent with some Parts of it. In short, Sir, Religion, in this Case, is like a Ship at Sea: Tho' all the other Parts were preserved ever so right and sound, one Leak unstopped or neglected would sink the whole. If it be a Part of my Religion not to destroy those Souls for whom Christ died, but rather to edifie and keep them from perishing, and any Power on Earth, Civil or Ecclesiastical, should require what appears to me to be inconsistent with this, I must run the same Risk for this, that I would do for the whole, or I am no true Christian.

Fourthly, Let me observe, that the Persecutions mentioned in Scripture and Church History are not so much for mere Opinions, as for Actions, and particularly for Disobedience to the Regulations that have been enacted by the supreme Power in Society. It is called Persecution for Righteousness Sake, because they will live godly, a suffering for well-doing, &c. *Jeremiah* might have enjoyed his own Opinion in Peace, and would not have been cast into the Dungeon, if he could have been prevailed upon but to give over Warning the People of their Danger. *Daniel* might have escaped the Den of Lions, had he but so far complied with a Regulation enacted by the publick Wisdom, as to shut his Windows and satisfy his Conscience with private Devotion for the Space of a single Month. There is nothing more usual than for Persecutors to throw the Blame of their Cruelty upon the Obstinacy and Disobedience of their Subjects. Never was there a more barbarous and unprovoked Persecution than that of the poor *Vaudois* in the Vallies of *Piedmont* by the Duke of *Savoy* near a hundred Years ago. But when the exquisite and inhuman Tortures of the inoffensive Sufferers had brought Expostulations from the other Princes and States of *Europe*; all Violence upon their Consciences was disclaimed, and the whole Matter imputed to the rebellious Stiffness and Disobedience of the mangled Wretches *, who knew so little of the first Principles.

* Cum vero tam horribilis laniena totum Christianum orbem, ipsos quoque Catholicos Romanos, nisi qui participes consili et facti fuerant, Jesuitas et Monachos, terrore pariter et execratione implevisset, palliare illud omnibus artibus et culpam in miseros Waldenses quasi Principi suo inobedientes conabantur rejicere.----*Marchio Pianezzius* negabat ullam ipsorum conscientiae vim illatam: ---- rebellionem justis armis castigatam.---- Sed Regina, mater Ducis, respondit, paternam tantum et lenem castigationem fuisse sumptam de immergeris et rebellibus subditis: quae perpetua erat tantae crudelitatis excusatio. *Hornii Hist. Ecclesiastica. Par. 3. Art. 3. § 66. 67.*

ples of Society as to refuse Obedience to Regulations, which tho' disapproved by themselves, had been enacted by those whom the Society had thought fit to entrust with the legislative Power. You cannot fail surely to know how much the Hardships that were put upon the Dissenters in *England* in King *Charles II's* Time, and the Barbarities that were exercised on the Presbyterians in *Scotland* during that same Period were excused by casting the same Reproach upon the Sufferers, which is the standing Argument of all Persecutors, and the Plea to which they have constant Recourse.

And here, Sir, I must observe to you, that the most Part of the World having but a very small Tincture of Religion, and by no Means such an Opposition to the least Degree of known Sin, especially when in Competition with their temporal Ease and worldly Happiness, as all regenerated Christians must have, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to convince them that any Thing else but Weakness and Folly could induce a Man to risk all that is dear to him in this Life, to which their chief Desires and Hopes are confined, for what may appear to them, tho' reasonable, yet but a Trifle in Comparison. The Language of Dr. Goodman, in his *Serious and compassionate Enquiry*, very possibly expresses the Thoughts of most Men. "A tender Conscience, he says, is nothing but either an ignorant or uninstructed Mind, or a sickly, melancholy, and superstitious Understanding." For this Reason, I would not chuse to argue with every Man upon this Subject. I am sensible that I might as well talk to a deaf Man, as hope for any Conviction in favours of a tender Conscience, in those at least whom the Apostle calls natural Men, till once their Natures are changed. It must needs be *Foolishness to them, neither can they know it, because it is spiritually discerned*. Notwithstanding all the Senses and Feeling we have been, of late, so deafened with, 'tis certain that the New Creature, (I hope the Scripture Language is not grown out of Fashion with you) when once he is born again, gets new Senses and new Feelings, which he was formerly a Stranger to. One of these new Feelings (to use your own Stile, *Andropodius*,) is an Antipathy at every Sort of known, deliberate and wilful Sin, tho' it were so small a temporal Injury to his Neighbour, as the taking from him unjustly to the Value of a single Half-penny. Not but that a good Man may be surprized, in this imperfect State, into single Acts even of much grosser Iniquity. But rather than habitually indulge himself in any known and apparent Breach of the Divine Law, for the Sake of any temporal Consideration, he will run the Risk of all that's in the Power of those

those impotent Nothings, who, *when they have killed the Body, have no more that they can do.* As I hope, Sir, this is a Language not unsuitable to your Feelings, I will venture to awaken in you the Reflection on another that's in a great Measure peculiar to them that are born again, namely, that however no worldly Consideration is regarded, by one of this Character, as a sufficient Motive, to do even the least temporal Injury to his Neighbour, in a wilful and deliberate Manner, yet the greatest Injury that's merely temporal, bears a very inconsiderable Proportion in his Estimation to a spiritual Injury done to the Interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom, and the eternal Salvation of those precious and immortal Souls which were the Purchase of his Blood, when this Injury is likewise known and apparent, and is only ballanced by some temporal Consideration. These however are Feelings which 'tis no Wonder that merely natural Men cannot form an Idea of, and that the securing and settling of temporal Properties is the supreme Consideration with them, even in a spiritual Court. Since I am led into this Train of Thinking, I shall only add, that a spiritual Man has no Taste for those Expedients that are now so plentifully furnished for reconciling any Compliance that is necessary for our Safety, with the Obligations of Religion. A remarkable Instance of which is the Use that is made by professed Christians of the Indulgence which the Prophet gave *Naaman* in a mere Piece of Obsequiousness to the Person of his Master, when supposed not barely to attend him, but to be employed in supporting him, as if it included any Degree of Respect allowed to be paid to his Master's Idol †. The Scrupulousness of the Convert in making a Case of Conscience of a Circumstance which his Zeal against Idolatry had already forestalled in his own Mind, is rather a Demonstration, on the other Hand, how uncompliant he resolved to be in all plainer Cases.

But to return from this Digression which I know not how I have been led into, let me observe in the fifth Place, that although Persecution were to be entirely limited to suffering for the sake of religious Opinions, yet to suffer for doing or not doing such Actions as are, in the Sufferers Opinion, Duties or Sins, is evidently a suffering for Opinions, and the Author of such sufferings is evidently a Persecutor for Opinions, unless any one will venture to say, that a Man may do that which appears to him to be a Sin, and omit that which appears to him to be a necessary Duty. And tho' you should be of Opinion that the Command of a Superior is sufficient warrant for such a Conduct, yet if I be

† See Werenfelsii Dissert. De Naamane Syro, ab Hypocrisi vindicato.

be of a contrary Opinion, my suffering in such a Cause must undoubtedly be a suffering for my Opinion. For the Illustration of this, I need go no farther than the present controversy. An Opinion prevails among many Ministers of this Church that the settling of Parishes not only against the Inclination but in spite of the most violent Opposition from (I do not say the Majority, Sir, this is far from being now the Question but) all or next to all those whose Souls the Presentee is to have the Charge of committed to him, especially that a Course of such Measures is highly detrimental to the Interests of practical Religion. How far this Opinion is well or ill founded, we may afterwards consider. The same Persons have another Opinion, that 'tis a Sin in them to have an active Hand in carrying on the Ruin and Destruction, in any Measure, of the real and most important Interest of Christ's Kingdom, or in doing an Action that's obstructive to the Edification and Salvation of those whose spiritual good 'tis their very Business and the End of their Office to promote. These Opinions, as they nearly affect their own Practice are no inconsiderable Part of their Religion. And should they be punished for acting in Consequence of these Opinions, is it not suffering because of their Opinions? Persecution for Conscience Sake? When the Commission in *November 1751*, and when you, *Andropodius*, at the last Assembly threatened the Presbytery of *Dumfermline* with the temporal Ruin of their Families, unless they would do an Action which they declared appeared to them to be a sinful one, what else was the Language of this, but one of those two Things? Either you must change your Opinion, and think it not a sinful Action; or, you must act against your Consciences, and do it while you think it a sinful Action. It is impossible for me to construe your conduct into any other meaning. Had you appointed a Committee to deal with their Consciences and convince them of their Error, and upon finding them obstinate, deposed them all equally, this might have admitted of a Construction, as if you had thought them in an Error of such pernicious Consequence, that you did not think the Cure of Souls could be entrusted any longer with those who maintained it. But without pretending any Thing of this sort, or taking any such Method, to apply mere Authority and worldly Terrors to overcome a Scruple of Conscience about an Action esteemed sinful, to tell them only: Do it, or we will drive you and your Families to the Door; this, Sir, is to a Tittle, the precise Language of Persecutors. It will admit no Construction but one of the two that have been mentioned. And if I was to chuse between them, what I thought the most favourable and charitable,

it would without Competition be the first, *viz.* change your Opinion. For the other is so directly inconsistent with the plain and express Direction of the Apostle, that I cannot impute it to any Assembly where the 14th Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans* is admitted to be the Word of God. The Apostle says, Do not even a lawful Action, till you be satisfied that it is so. And will any Assembly take upon them to say, Yes, you must do an Action which you are convinced is unlawful? And therefore I think it the most charitable Construction that your Conduct will admit of, to believe that your Meaning was to change their Opinion, in order to an Alteration of their Actions. But what ever your Intention was, 'tis certain that the Controversy between you and them turned upon the Truth or Falshood of an Opinion. They were of Opinion, that a certain Action was sinful. You were of Opinion, that it was not, and having Authority over them, you insisted on their following your Opinion in Practice, which till once their own Opinion was changed, they could not do, without violating the Dictates of their Consciences. Whatever therefore they suffered upon that Account, was evidently, for neither more nor less but, because they were of such an Opinion. And altho' your Charity should suffer you, without any Grounds that I know of, at least, as far as ever I have heard, that were alledged and proven in Judgment, to conclude them, as well as Thousands of others who, without being in the same Situation, do espouse the same Opinion, to be all Hypocrites, and only making a Pretence of an Opinion which they really do not believe; yet you must at least allow the Supposition to be possible; and that when ever any one is punished for not doing an Action which he thinks sinful, he really suffers for his being of that Opinion.

In the last Place, I must observe to you that there is a very great Difference between a general unguarded Assertion thrown out in a loose Manner, or in a hasty popular Harangue, and a Proposition advanced in a strict Piece of Argumentation, of a Sheet of Paper or two, that employed several learned Heads about six Weeks to draw it up, especially when attended with these two Circumstances, namely, that the Universality of the Proposition is limited by one Exception which confirms the Assertion in all other Cases: And secondly, that the Argument depends upon the Exclusion of this very Exception which, you say, I might in Charity have taken for granted was understood. If I was endeavouring to convince you that the Floor or Furniture of the Room above us was in Danger of being burnt by a Fire which I supposed was in that Room, and you should tell me

me that my Apprehension was without Foundation, for that there was not a Fire in any Room of your House except the Kitchen : Could I, in Charity, or in common Sense, take it for granted that you meant to except that very Room about which the Question was likewise ? The Case we are now arguing is precisely the same. I hold that when the supreme or any created Powers impose upon us any Thing that is against our Consciences, we ought rather to expose ourselves to the severest Punishment they are capable of inflicting than obey them in such a Case. In Opposition to this, you tell me, that 'tis an established Maxim, that active Obedience is to be yielded in all Cases, except where the Society is to be dissolved. But does not the Scripture, say I, expressly require of us to venture the Resentment of our Superiors, and actually to suffer all that they can inflict upon us, rather than obey them in an ill Thing ? Do you deny that Christians should ever expose themselves to Persecution upon any Occasion ? O ! say you, by no Means, I think you might have taken it for granted that I do not. Pray then, Sir, (may not I return ?) what is it that we are disputing about ?

§ 9. AN. I will not pretend, *Theodulus*, that this Argument has no Effect upon me. I will at least suspend my Judgment, till I hear what you can say to take off the Force of my Objections. In the mean Time, if you have any Thing else to offer from the Scripture, I shall patiently attend to it.

TH. Sir, your Patience has been so extraordinary, and so obliging, that I will not abuse the Indulgence you are so good as to give me. I thought to have argued in the second Place from those Passages of Scripture where we are expressly cautioned against human Authority, and warned not to yield implicate Obedience to it in Opposition to the Authority of God, and especially in religious Matters, that *we are not to be the Servants of Men*, or to regard as *Doctrines the Commandments of Men*. In the third Place, from the particular Instances which we have recorded in Scripture of Regulations enacted by human Authority, that were evidently so wrong, that it would have been an undoubted Sin to have complied with them. Fourthly, From a great Variety of Passages, especially in the Prophets, where the People are blamed for doing those very Things that had been enacted by their Rulers both civil and ecclesiastical, where Sin and Error is imputed to the Subjects, tho' their Superiors made them to Sin, and caused them to err, and where Punishment is threatned, and actually inflicted by God upon the People on the Account of such Sins as they were led into by the Authority of the supreme Power in human Society. This the Heathens them-

selves seem to have been sensible of. Witness that Observation of the Poet. *Quicquid delirant Reges, plectuntur Achiivi.* Tho' it would not be so easy to vindicate this conduct of Divine Providence, if it was the Duty of the People to supersede their own private Judgment, as soon as any Regulation is enacted by Authority, if they are bound to obey even all such as they disapprove in any Degree, and if required, to put them in Execution. Lastly, From those Passages of Scripture where Disobedience to Regulations enacted by Rulers is recorded to the Honour of the Disobedient, and their Disobedience is expressly approved by God himself; and that even while the Society continued to subsist in the same organical Frame, and the Authority of the Rulers was still submitted to in all other Instances. These, Sir, you may easily apprehend, might afford abundant Sources of arguing. But as I am really ashamed that so clear a Point is disputed by any of my Brethren; so I am loath to try your Patience any longer, by entering into a particular Discussion of the several Topicks, after what has happened on the first Argument. And therefore I shall leave the general Hints to be improved by your own Reflexions.

AN. The last Argument that you have mentioned, one would think should be decisive, if you can make it out. For if there are any Instances in the Scripture, recorded with divine Approbation, of Subjects refusing to obey a supreme human Authority, which yet they continued to own as such; I confess I would be at a loss what to reply to it. You had Occasion indeed to mention the Case of *Saul's* Footmen refusing to execute his bloody Orders against the Priests of the Lord. But if you have no other or better Examples to produce, your Argument I am afraid will have but a feeble Support. For I do not remember that you said any Thing to take off the Exception which you say you heard a Gentleman, who signs the Reasons of Dissent, urge against it in a Committee of the Assembly 1751. You cannot but be sensible that however justifiable it might be for the Executioner in *Edinburgh*, for Example, to refuse murdering a Man at the Command of the Lord Provost, or even of the King himself, in an extrajudicial Way, yet he could not be so easily vindicated for refusing to execute a Sentence legally past in Court, especially if it was confirmed, or the Orders were given by the legislative Power of the Nation.

TH. Sir, I think the Gentleman might at least have admitted this as an Example of Orders which ought to have been disobeyed, from whatever human Authority they proceeded. To murder fourscore and five innocent Persons, and to destroy a whole City

City both Men and Women, Children and Sucklings with the edge of the Sword, untried and unheard, was such an Order as requires no Distinction of human Authority for an excuse to disobey it in any one that considers the sixth Command, as an Order directed by God himself to others as well as Magistrates. However, Sir, as this Gentleman is of Opinion that it was not the Matter of the Command, but only the Insufficiency of *Saul's* Authority, who gave it, that could justify the Disobedience of the Guards, I have those two Things to reply to it.

In the first Place, I thought you had been so far from excepting military Authority out of the Cases where the most punctual Obedience is due, that on the contrary, you had argued from what is usually thought necessary, in that Case, to the same punctuality in the Case of civil or ecclesiastical Authority. The Guards were Soldiers, and the least Authority over them, that you comprehend belonged to *Saul*, is that of their General or Commander in chief (and that without controul from any Superior upon Earth) from whom they were immediately to take their Directions in all military Operations. He alledged a Rebellion, than which there is no Case where a Dispensation with Laws, Severity, and Dispatch are commonly thought more necessary. And if the City of *Nob* had assisted or favoured the escape of any Rebel, which the King might be supposed to have the best Intelligence of, he likewise, or the Commander in chief, is commonly allowed to be the properest Judge how far military Execution was necessary to strike a Terror into others in the Infancy of a Rebellion. And if in these Circumstances the Soldiers are allowed a private Judgment of their superior Officer, to give *Saul* no higher a Character, this is giving up a Case, which of all others, has been looked upon as the most favourable to your Side of the Question, and is even stickled for by those who do by no Means carry the Matter your length in the Case of civil, and far less in that of ecclesiastical Authority.

But in the second Place, I apprehend the Gentleman proceeded upon a Mistake in denying the supreme Power to have been in the Person of *Saul*, and taking his Measures of the *Israelitish*, from the happy Constitution of the *British* Government. *Saul* undoubtedly was an absolute Prince, and for this I appeal to the Demands of the People, and *Samuel's* reasoning with them, as they are recorded in the 8th Chapter of the first Book of *Samuel*. Their Demand was, *make us a King to judge us like all the Nations*. They were then, and had formerly been, under God, governed by single Persons as their chief, tho' limited Magistrates. But having observed, it seems, some Conveniences in the absolute

lute Government which has always prevailed in the eastern Parts of the World, and which probably had given their Neighbours an Advantage sometimes in the Wars they had with them, they came to be violently prepossessed with a notion that they would never be equal matches for these absolute Powers in their Neighbourhood till they were under the same Form of Government. And therefore they would not only have a King, but a King like the rest of the Nations. *Samuel* by direction from God endeavoured to make them sensible of their Folly; by describing the Nature and Consequences of this sort of Government they were grown so enamoured of. And 'tis obvious that he gives them a Description of a most absolute Monarch, a King that would take their Sons, and appoint them for himself, for his Chariots, and to be his Horsemen, and some to run before his Chariots, that would set his Captains over thousands, &c. to ear his Ground, and reap his Harvest, that would take their Daughters to be Confectionaries, Cooks, &c. that would take their Fields, Vineyards, &c. and give them to his Servants. And after a long Description of this sort, he concludes with these Words, *and ye shall be his Servants*. All this fair warning of the kind of Government they were so fond of, was not able to move them from their Purpose, but upon these very Terms, they insisted to be like their Neighbours. *Nay*, said they, *but we will have a King over us, that we may also be like all the Nations, and that our King may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our Battles*. So they were taken at their Word, and *Saul* was given to them, a King such as they desired.

Here then, if ever, was an absolute Monarch whose right to the supreme Power was unquestionable. Not only submitted to, but demanded and insisted on by the People, in this precise Character. Not only consented to, but nominated by God himself, and solemnly consecrated to that Office by an inspired Prophet. The Lord's anointed indeed, with a better Title to that Designation, than many who have had the same Complement paid to them. So that the Gentleman could not have been more unlucky in an Instance where Disobedience was to be accounted for by the want of sufficient Authority in the Commander. And yet this very Monarch who had so absolute and unlimited a Power vested in him both by God and the People, may furnish us with Instances enough during the Course of his reign both of a lawful Disobedience, and of an unlawful Obedience to him. Justly did his Guards refuse to execute his barbarous Sentence against the Priests. Justly did the whole People rescue his Son *Jonathan* from the Execution of the rash and unnatural Sentence he past against

against him, and confirmed with an Oath: And justly had it been done if they had disobeyed him in many other Instances. Happy had it been for *Doeg* if he had disobeyed him too. Happy for many of his Instruments in the Persecution he carried on with such unrelenting fury against *David*, if *David* was inspired in the Curses he denounces against them in the Psalms. Justly might his Army have disobeyed his Orders for saving *Agag* and the Spoil of the *Amalekites*. Justly might his Servants have disobeyed him in seeking to a Wizard. And justly was the Man who brought *David* his Crown and the News of his Death, punished for obeying the last Orders that ever he gave.

But it would be endless to enumerate all the Instances of this sort that might be pick'd up out of the Scripture History. I shall only mention a few, for your Satisfaction in this Matter, where the Disobedience is expressly approven or the Obedience disapproved by God, as you seem to be sensible that this is quite decisive of the Question between us. One of these you have in the first Chapter of *Exodus*, in the Case of the *Egyptian* Midwives, who were expressly commanded by an Order from the supreme Power, when they did their Office to the *Hebrew* Women, to kill such of the Children as were males. This they disobeyed, and their Disobedience was approven and rewarded by God. Ver. 17. *But the Midwives feared God, and did not as the King of Egypt commanded them.* And again Verses 20. and 21. *Therefore God dealt well with the Midwives.—And it came to pass because the Midwives feared God, that he made them Houses.* Another Instance of Disobedience to the same Regulation, with the Divine Approbation of it likewise, we have *Heb. xi. 23.* By Faith *Moses*, when he was born, was hid three Months of his Parents, because they saw he was a proper Child: and they were not afraid of the King's Commandment. In the same Chapter is recorded with Approbation the Disobedience of *Rachab* the Harlot, to an express Order of her Sovereign the King of *Jericho*, for her Disobedience to which she is likewise said to have been rewarded. Verse 31. *By Faith the Harlot Rachab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the Spies with Peace.* The King of *Jericho's* order against this we have an Account of, *Josh. ii. 3.* *And the King of Jericho sent unto Rachab, saying, Bring forth the Men that are come to thee, which are entred into thine House, for they be come to search out all the Country.* *Obadiah's* obstructing the Execution of a Sentence passed by the supreme Power in the Kingdom of *Israel* is expressly approven, and imputed to his Fear of God. *1 Kings xviii. 3, 4.* *Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly:*

greatly: For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the Prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took an hundred Prophets, and hid them by fifty in a Cave, and fed them with Bread and Water. Was not the Obedience of the two first Captains that Ahaziah sent to apprehend *Elijah* most remarkably disapproven and punished with immediate Destruction by Fire from Heaven? as we have it in the first Chapter of *2 Kings*. And was not the Disobedience of the third Captain, in so far as he abstained from any Violence, with all his fifty Soldiers, as plainly approven, by getting his Life for a Prey? The People of *Judah* are accused as being guilty of the Murder of *Zechariah*, tho' it was only in Execution of a Sentence passed against him by the supreme Power. *2 Chron.* xxiv. 21. *And they conspired against him, and stoned him with Stones at the Commandment of the King, in the House of the Lord.* And if this was the *Zacharias* whom our Saviour mentions, he speaks of it as a Crime that still cried for Vengeance upon that People. *Mat.* xxiii. 35. *That upon you may come all the righteous Blood shed upon the Earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the Temple and the Altar.* The People of the ten Tribes are threatened by the Prophet, and Judgments are denounced against them for their ready compliance and Obedience which they yielded to their Rulers in the Corruptions which they introduced, which is called in the Text nothing else but walking after or obeying the Commandment, *i. e.* because no sooner was a wrong Regulation enacted by those whom the Society thought fit to entrust with the legislative Power, than they obeyed and executed it. *Hof.* v. 12. *Ephraim is oppressed, and broken in Judgment, because he willingly walked after the Commandment. Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a Moth, &c.* If these Instances do not satisfy you, Sir, I have more ready to be produced when ever you are pleased to call for them, or if your Patience be not now tired. But as I do not chuse unnecessarily to trespass upon it, I shall only add at present, that of some Instances which there has been already Occasion to mention, I hope you will not refuse that the Apostles Disobedience to the Sanhedrim, *Daniel's* Disobedience to the solemn Decree of *Darius*, and that of the three famous Witnesses to *Nebuchadnezzar*, are all recorded in the Scripture with Approbation, and as Examples for our Imitation.

§ 10. AN. I shall frankly own to you, *Theodulus*, that you have already produced more than ever I expected, and I will not put you to the Trouble of quoting any more Examples. I can easily guess by the Sample you have given me, what the Nature of

of them may be. Shall I proceed now to state my Objections against your Doctrine?

TH. My dear Sir, I am very loath to put the good-natured Indulgence you have favoured me with so long to any farther Trial. But the Doctrine which you see is so fully contained, and so frequently insisted on, and inculcated in the Scripture, is really a Doctrine of natural Religion itself, and accordingly was not unknown to many of the Heathens. In Truth *Socrates*, one of the best of them all, was a Martyr to it, returning the same Answer to the Rulers at *Athens* which the Apostles did to the *Jewish* Sanhedrim, as *Plato* informs us in his Apology. And therefore if you have any more Patience, I would beg Leave to show you, just in a Word or two, how consonant this Doctrine is to Reason as well as Revelation.

AN. If you'll keep your Word as to Brevity, I have yet a little Patience at your Service. But I hope you'll remember that it cannot be a great Deal that is left me, after the Expence of it you have cost me.

TH. In the first Place, If there is a God, (and that there is all Nature cries aloud through all her Works) he must be supreme over all, and his Authority must undoubtedly controul all inferior and subordinate Authority whatever. There is a Gradation, and Subordination in Authority. And when a superior Authority is interposed, that which is inferior is thereby annihilated, and ceases to oblige in Opposition thereto *. An Order from a Captain is superseded by a contrary one from the Colonel. And the Command of the General would controul both. In our Constitution, you know, if the Sentence of a Presbytery be repealed by the Synod, it signifies nothing. And a Sentence of the Assembly renders that of a Synod of no Effect. If there was no higher Step in the Gradation, to be sure, the Authority of the Assembly must be regarded as supreme in all Respects, by those who admit the Authority thereof. I acknowledge that as the invisible King of the Church does not think fit to interpose in a sensible Manner, for that Reason, we do regard the Authority of the Assembly as supreme in one Respect, *i. e.* that the Matters determined by them are no farther to be litigated, in so far as our passive Submission is concerned. But, Sir, I hope 'tis a Point not to be disputed by you, that there is an Authority in the

* C'est une regle qui ne souffre point d'exception, que le commandement d'une inferieur n'oblige point lors qu'il est contraire a celui de son superieur. *Placette Traité de la Consc. l. 1. ch. 11.*

Church superior to that of the Assembly, that there is a King and Head of the Church to whom the Assembly as well as every Individual is subject, and in so far as he does interpose, *to him every Knee must bow.* And if he has revealed his Will to us concerning our own Actions, for which we are to answer at his Tribunal, in so far as our own personal Conduct is concerned, either in the Scripture, or by the Light of Nature, in that Respect there is undoubtedly a Step higher than the Assembly in the Gradation of Authority. And therefore, by the most obvious and unquestionable Maxim of Reason, where ever the Voice of this highest and truly supreme Authority is perceived, our Obedience to it cannot be disputed by any inferior Rival.

In the second Place, Experience, and the History of all Ages, and of all Societies, civil and ecclesiastical, confirms a melancholly Truth, which a little Insight into the present corrupt State of human Nature will soon discover, namely, that if our earthly Superiors were to be obeyed without Choice, Examination or Reserve, the most horrible Enormities might be innocently committed, which is a most evident and gross Absurdity. It is establishing a Rule for our own Conduct, which we certainly know is a false one. I would fain know, Sir, if you was wanting a Piece of Work made streight, what you would think of the Tradesman, if upon your desiring a Sight of his Rule, he should show you one that was most visibly and excessively crooked? And do you think that any Thing better can be expected of the Morals of that Man who lays it down as a Rule for his own Conduct, to obey the supreme Power in any human Society, ay till it can be, or even should be overturned? Without having Recourse to the Doctrine discovered to us by Revelation of the present State of Corruption and Degeneracy into which Mankind are fallen, one needs but to have Eyes and Ears to be soon made sensible how universally this is spread thro' all the Ranks of Men. You have read some History, *Andropodius*. There you see whether the upper Part of Society have usually the greatest Regard for God, for Religion, and Morality. I shall only say for my Part, that I am sure of one Thing, *viz.* that of all others they are exposed to the strongest and most irresistable Temptations to violate the Regard that is due to such Objects, and particularly to fall into Profanity, and a Contempt of the supreme Being. This I can say with the greater Confidence, because it has been said before, by a much wiser Man than I am, and that in a much stronger Manner than I have said it; even by him who prayed to God: *Give me not Riches: lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord?* And still stronger by one that was still wiser

wiser than he, who said, *It is easier for a Camel to go thro' the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God.* Let any one but read the Lives of a *Caligula*, a *Nero*, or *Hellogabalus*, whom the greatest Society in the World thought fit to entrust with the legislative Power, and then say, Whether even such Regulations of theirs as were not proper Grounds of a Rebellion, were fit to be obeyed, by those who had any Regard for God or their own Souls, and to be put in Execution by them of whom it was required? One of the Regulations which was enacted by the first of them, was the setting up a Brothel-house in his own Palace, thoroughly furnished with all Kinds of Prostitutes, Bawds, and Panders for the Improvement of his Revenues. — I see, Sir, by your Looks, that you are impatient at my entering into so fertile a Field. But you need not be afraid of my chusing to make a long Stay in it. It is, like some other fruitful Grounds, so deep and dirty, that I have no Pleasure, I assure you, in walking over it. And are those Regulations fit to be obeyed and executed, the very Rehearsal of which is not fit for a Christian, nay, for a sober or chaste Ear? Whether you think every such Regulation would justify Resistance to the supreme Power, I know not. But this I know, that upon all sober Principles of Government, a great Deal must be born with, before Recourse is had to this last Remedy. And if active Obedience must be given till overturning the Government becomes seasonable or practicable; if it is a Duty to comply with all the previous Steps taken by the Rulers; O! Sir, do but imagine what a Deal of Wickedness such a Doctrine would sanctify. Upon this Supposition, History must appear in a very new and a very different Light, from what it has usually done. Those very Characters, that have hitherto raised Indignation and Detestation in almost every Reader, and that have been commonly regarded as the most abandoned Prostitutes, and the basest, the fordidest Instruments of Wickedness and Impiety, must be considered on the contrary, as Characters the most conformable to the Law of God; as bright Patterns of due Obedience, and exemplary Instances of a high Pitch of Virtue. Strange! if this be the Case, that good Men should always avoid acting upon such a Theatre of Glory, and leave the Honour of setting such useful Examples, to the most profligate and ignominious of Mankind! Do not imagine, *Andropodius*, that the Rulers in ecclesiastical Society, which is composed of the same Materials as civil Societies are, can claim any Exemption from the Corruption which is but too visibly common to both. If you allow me the Opportunity of another Conversation with you upon this Sub-

ject, I may perhaps put you in Mind of *Neros* and *Caligulas* that have been in the Church, of Synods and Councils that have (agreeable to the common Saying, *Corruptio optimi est pessima*) even outdone all the Rivals in Wickedness that civil Society has afforded. But ere they arrived at the highest Pitch of Profanity, there must have been intermediate Steps of Defection, and many an impious Sentence to be executed long before there could be a just Pretence for Rebellion or Separation. If you will read Mr. *Baxter's* Church History of Bishops and their Councils, (and I do most sincerely and heartily wish that every Member of the next Assembly would read that Book) or indeed any History of Councils, you will find that, for the most Part, the more extensive their Authority was, and the more Intercourse they had with Courts and great Men, so much the more flagitious was their Conduct, and so much the more wicked were the Sentences they ordered the Execution of. I am far from saying or thinking that our Degeneracy is yet to be compared with what has been in the Church: But 'tis a Maxim in Logick, that an Argument which proves too much cannot be good, and I am sorry to find the very same Arguments made use of for admitting Ministers among us, that would have been equally conclusive for admitting a *Vigilius*, a *Sergius* III, and a *John* XII, and that might have been urged with the same Strength for the Ordination of an Archbishop that was but a Child of five Years old, and of a Patriarch that could neither read nor write, which is but a small Specimen of what Church Authority has insisted upon the Execution of.

But in the third Place, Sir, as the most intelligent Men are oftentimes very Wicked; so the very best sort of Men, and much more the very worst sort of Men, who you see have a great chance for being at the Helm of human Governments have none of them infinite Knowledge, and are at least very fallible. And therefore however necessary it may be, in most Cases, to admit their Judgment for a Rule, when better cannot be had, for determining Controversies between Man and Man, so as that an End may be put to Litigation, and the Differences arising in human Society may be composed, by at least a passive Submission; yet with respect to our own Actions, whereof each of us personally must give account to God, it must needs be a most inexcusable Choice to exchange a perfect and infallible Rule, when we have such a one, for one that is acknowledged to be so liable to Error. When we have no access to the infallible Rule, *i. e.* in Cases where neither Scripture nor the Light of Nature points out to us the Law of God, in these Cases we never refused that

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the Law of Men was to be admitted for the Rule not only of our passive Submission, but likewise of our active Obedience. But when the Will of God does appear to us, it must surely be the immediate Rule of our Behaviour. And it can be no certain evidence of our being deceived in the Appearance, that other Men who are acknowledged to be fallible do not perceive it. We are liable indeed ourselves to Errors and Mistakes, and may imagine that we perceive the Will of God when we do not; and therefore if we knew of any Body else who, we were sure, could not be deceived, to his or their infallible Instructions and Directions we should chearfully submit. But as we know of none such, we can think of no surer Course, in a Matter that we are so deeply and personally interested in as our own Actions, than to make the best use we can of the Light we have, in Order to pass private Judgment on what appears to us to be the Will of God. This, where ever it can be discerned we are sure is infallible, and cannot mislead us. The Judgment of Men we are sure is fallible, and when it disagrees with the Law of God we are sure is false. But whatever may be said as to particular Instances, 'tis certain that no Rule is fit to be established universally, and without Restriction, but an infallible one. That the Judgment of Men is not so, you yourselves confess by refusing to admit it without one Restriction. If you took it for infallible, you would submit to it, whether it was consistent with the temporal Safety and Subsistence of the Society or no. And since by your own Confession it is not infallible, why should we submit to it, whether it be agreeable to the Will of God, or no? To admit a Rule of Action which is owned to be fallible, even with your Restriction, *i. e.* in all Cases where it is not inconsistent with the temporal Preservation of the Society, to admit it, I say, so universally as you contend for, *i. e.* whether it be agreeable to the Will of God or no, would really put us in a Situation something like that which was supposed by *Ignatius Loyola*, the famous Founder of the Society of *Jesuits*. He was wont frequently to say, "That if the Pope should command him to embark on the first Vessel he met with, and to set sail without Pilot, without Oars, without Rudder, without Provisions, and without knowing where he was to go, he would obey." But if we should expose ourselves to the same apparent Uncertainties, it would be with this Inconsistency, and with this Disadvantage on our Part, that all the while, we believed ourselves under the Direction of a very fallible Guide, while he took himself to be under that of an infallible one. The *Jesuits* are so sensible of the Connexion between Obedience without reserve, and Infallibility, that they never

never pretend to the one without maintaining the other. Accordingly *Bellarmino* says: "If the Pope should command Vices and forbid Virtues, the Church would be bound to believe that Vices were good and Virtues evil.*" And indeed if one would allow himself to think upon the Matter, Infallibility is evidently as necessary in the Guide of our Actions as in the guide of our Opinions. And therefore there cannot be a greater Inconsistency than you are guilty of when you refuse to admit the Judgment of Men as the Rule of your belief, because it is not infallible, and yet do not refuse to admit the same as the Rule of your Practice, especially when the latter does evidently include the former: For the doing of any Action in Faith, or so as to be accepted of God, depends upon your belief of this Proposition, that such an Action is not sinful, which you are obliged to believe it seems upon an Authority which you allow not to be infallible.

I thought to have insisted upon some other Topicks. But lest I break my Word to you, as to the Brevity you have so good a Title to expect, I dare not trust myself to enter upon any farther particulars, especially as I can easily guess how impatient you may by this Time be to get out your Objections against my Doctrine, to which I shall therefore now give Way.

§. II. AN. Truly, Sir, my only Objection has been so often hinted already, and is, in my Apprehension, so obvious, that I doubt not of your anticipating it in your own Mind. But, if I must repeat it again, I would fain know how this Doctrine can be reconciled with the Subsistence of human Society? For your Salvo of passive Obedience, how far soever it may go, will not altogether serve the Purpose. The good Order of human Society can never be preserved, if there be no Authority in the Rulers to get the Sentences they pass put in Execution. But if you may refuse, and I may refuse to do so when appointed, may not every one equally do so? And if Sentences are not executed, does not this come to the same Thing as if there was no Power to decide any Difference that may happen in Society? And is not this equivalent to downright Anarchy? And just as good as if there was no Government at all? There seems to be so universal a Sense of this, that I take it for an established Maxim, that however one may oppose a Regulation before it be enacted, yet when once it is enacted, all Opportunity of Opposition is then over, and nothing farther remains but for every one in his respective Station to conform himself thereto. In so much that there is nothing more common in all Courts of Judicature, than for the Praeses or Clerk perhaps to sign a Deed of the Court, which

* Bell. de Pont, Lib. 4. Cap. 5.

which they are convinced is most iniquous, and which they opposed with all the Zeal they were capable of, as their Stations gave them access while the Matter was entire. As this is a Thing which is done every Day, and is so far from being thought strange, that their Refusal I dare say, would be considered as very assuming; and be received with Indignation by every Body, I mention it only to show you what an universal Impression there must be of the necessity of this to the very Subsistence of any Thing like Government among Men. Is it without Reason then that our Friends the Dissenters have said that they who maintain that such Disobedience deserves no Censure, maintain in Effect, that there ought to be no such Thing as Government and Order? Is it not denying those first Principles by which Men are united in Society, and endeavouring to establish such Maxims as will justify Licentiousness and Disorder at least, if not Rebellion, in any sort of Government? A surrendering the essential Prerogative of Society? Deserting the Principles, and betraying the Rights of the Constitution? So that if your Doctrine was to be universally received, there is plainly an End to all Government, and all Men would *ipso facto* be reduced to a state of Nature, which a little Experience, I believe, would soon make them tired of, and consequently of the Principles that reduced them to it.

TH. I am sensible, Sir, by the uncommon Diffidence which now appears in your looks, that your Argument has suffered a little by its being so long deferred. And therefore I shall do it all Justice by supplying in my own Imagination what I see it wants of its usual Force. I mean that decisive Tone, those demonstrative Looks and Gestures, and that Air of Superiority in every Muscle of the Face with which it is usually flourished in the Mouths of our young Orators, whether Lawyers or Divines, both in the Assembly and out of it. It is no new or surprising Thing to me that this Doctrine is attacked by such a Cry raised against it when ever it happens to stand in the Way of any Projects that are thought to have Power on their Side. In the very same Way were the *English* Nonconformists used in the Reign of King Charles II. Dr. Calamy tells us "that the whole Nation almost was filled with the most tragical Exclamation against the Doctrine maintained by them at the *Savoy* Conference." And, that Bp. Morley particularly in Print asserted, that this Assertion of Mr. Baxter's * was not only false but destructive of all Authority human and divine, as not only denying all Power to the Church of making Canons ecclesiastical, for the better ordering and governing the Church, but also taking away all

* Vid. p. 87.

“legislative Power from the King and Parliament, and even from God himself.” You see, Sir, there are others that can match the most tragical Orator of you all in rhetorical flights. The eloquent Dr. *Parker* boasts, that he had demonstrated “the inconsistency of Liberty of Conscience with the first and fundamental Laws of Government.” And never fails to represent the Principles of the Nonconformists as what must presently overthrow all Government, and bring in all Confusion into the World. He declares, that “unless Princes have Power to bind their Subjects to that Religion that they apprehend most advantageous to publick Peace and Tranquillity, and restrain those religious Mistakes that tend to its Subversion, they are no better then Statues and Images of Authority.” The no less eloquent Dr. *Goodman* seems, in his sober Enquiry, to be every whit as much alarmed at that formidable Enemy to all Government, Conscience, against which he therefore, in pure Compassion to the World, declares open War. This Conscience, he says, “is thought to have not only a Priviledge, but a kind of Prerogative, to carry with it an Exemption from all human Laws, but especially ecclesiastical, it pretends to be God’s peculiar, and exempt from any inferior Cognizance? nay it looks like a Dictatorian Authority, and seems to be *Legibus soluta*. This, says he, (they would make us believe) can limit the Magistrate, null Laws, forbid execution, and which is more, change the very Nature of Things, and make good and holy, that which was wicked and rebellious before. This can canonize any Opinion, legitimate any Action, warrant any Extravagancy in the Person that owns it, whatsoever he thinks can be no Heresy, and whatsoever he does can be no Sin.” And he tells us that “unless we can pull down this Usurper, we must look for no Magistracy.” ’Tis well known that the primitive Christians were traduced in this respect to such a Degree, that their Enemies got the popular Cry raised against them, *Christianos ad Leones*, away with them, it is not fit that they should live. Even he that wrote the 13th Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans* was represented as a pestilent Fellow and a mover of Sedition, as one that did exceedingly trouble the City, and had turned the World upside down. Because *Mordecai* found himself under a necessity to transgress one single Commandment of *Ahasuerus*, and in Obedience to God refused to bow and reverence *Haman*, which the King had commanded; therefore the *Jews* are represented as a certain People whose Laws are different from all People, neither keep they the King’s Laws; therefore it is not for the King’s Profit to suffer them*.

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* *Eth.* iii. 2, 3, 8.

Under all this Load of reproach, Sir, which those must lay their account to be constantly branded with, who are determined to prefer the Authority of God to that of any of his Creatures, they have one comfort to support them, and 'tis not a small one, namely, that in Fact it has usually happened, that they who have been thus calumniated, have really proven the very best of Subjects, the most conscientiously obedient to their Superiors of every sort, and the most remote from a Spirit of Sedition and Rebellion. They can appeal to the Consciences of their Calumniators themselves, whether they are not the most punctual in their Obedience in every Thing where the Authority of the supreme Being is not interposed. So *Daniel's* Enemies were obliged to acknowledge. For the *Presidents* and *Princes* sought to find Occasion against *Daniel* concerning the Kingdom, but they could find none Occasion nor Fault : Forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any Error or Fault found in him. Then said these Men, we shall not find any Occasion against this *Daniel* except we find it against him concerning the Law of his God †. And accordingly his earthly Sovereign was so sensible of this, that he could neither eat nor sleep while his faithful and obedient Servant *Daniel* was in the Lions Den, into which he had no Scruple to Order his Accusers to be thrown, as soon as he was delivered from it. The like Faithfulness did *Ahasuerus* find in *Mordecai*, who, even before his Advancement, detected a Conspiracy against the King in two of his Servants, who, in all probability, would have made no Scruple to trample upon the Laws of God in Obedience to that Master whose Life however they could sacrifice to their own ambitious Views. Never was there more meek and humble, more peaceable and obedient Subjects than the primitive Christians ; while, at the same Time, no Threatenings, no Torments could prevail upon them to comply with any Regulation that was inconsistent with the Religion they professed. *Christiani sumus* was equally the Argument for both. They were Christians, and therefore would not comply ; and they were Christians, and therefore would not rebel. *Origen* takes Notice of the Difference between them and their Heathen Neighbours in this Respect, when he observes in his Book against *Celsus*, “ That the Church of God at *Athens* is meek and “ quiet, approving itself to the great God ; whereas the popular “ Assembly at *Athens* is seditious and tumultuous. The same, “ he observes, may be said of the Churches of God and the vulgar “ Assemblies at *Corinth* or *Alexandria*.” And indeed the blessed Founder of Christianity, tho' he would never comply with any

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* Dan. vi. 4, 5.

Regulation that was inconsistent with his Duty to God and his Design of saving Sinners, and was for that Reason excommunicated by the higher Powers, together with all that should own him to be the Christ; yet he left us a noble Example of Submission to Superiors in every other Case, that *we should follow his Steps who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth: Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.* He knew how to render to *Caesar* the Things that were *Caesar's*; tho' neither *Caesar* nor the Sanhedrim could hinder him from rendering, at the same Time, to God the Things that were God's, and that without either seeking the Dissolution of the Society whereof he was a Member, or deserting his own Station in it. Whoever will be at the Pains to look thro' the *Synodicon in Gallia reformata* will meet with surprising Instances of the most unshaken Loyalty, and the profoundest Submission, and Obedience of the *French* Protestants to their haughty Superiors, while they suffered with amazing Patience for not complying with Regulations that were contrary to their Religion. That the same Observation is abundantly applicable to the Nonconformists in *England* in King *Charles II's* Time, is well known to all those who have any Acquaintance with their History, notwithstanding the sham Plots that were sometimes contrived and palmed upon them by their Enemies. And, as for ourselves, may I not appeal, *Andropodius*, to your own sober, and unprejudiced Reflection, Whether, taking the Acts and Constitutions of the Church of *Scotland* in Bulk, and abstracting from this particular Instance where our Consciences are straitned, we or you pay the most uniform and punctual Regard to them?

AN. I am not accusing you, Sir, of Disobedience in any other Instance, and I know no Ground you have for your Accusation of us.

TH. Sir, I am not to accuse any Body, nor (I do assure you) have I any particular Person in my View. But when we are so openly arraigned for Disobedience, and accused of seditious Principles and Practices, one cannot help, upon that Occasion, recollecting that the Strength of our Accusers does chiefly consist of two sorts of Persons, Gentlemen that are ruling Elders, and our younger Brethren in the Ministry. (I believe there was not above one of the Dissenters from the Commission in *March 1752*, that were above ten Years standing in the Ministry.) As for the first, Sir, if those Gentlemen do generally pay as uniform and universal regard to all the Acts of Assembly, both with Respect to the Performance of Duties belonging to their Office in the Church,

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and their Behaviour in a more private Capacity, as may be expected from so high a Degree of Zeal as they have lately shewn for Obedience to Regulations that are appointed by the same human Authority, but not so clearly at least, by a divine one, it is more, I fancy you will allow, than they have all the good luck to be usually celebrated for. 'Tis true none of them can have a Seat in the General Assembly, (tho' that should happen to be the only Place where he ever acted in the Capacity of an Elder) without an express Attestation from some Presbytery, "That he is faithful in the Discharge of his Office, tender and circumspect in his Walk, punctual in his Attendance upon Ordinances, and strict in his Observation of the Lord's Day, and in regularly keeping up the Worship of God in his Family." These, you know, are Regulations that have been enacted, I do not say by the Authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, but (let it be superior or inferior) by the supreme Authority of this Church, in several repeated Acts, and insisted on to that Degree that none can act and vote as a Member of the Assembly without an Attestation, as I have said, of his complying with these Regulations. Yet I have the Authority of the Assembly itself, as well as of inferior Judicatories, to say, that a violent Suspicion prevails as if all these Attestations were not grounded upon sufficient Evidence. And when it has been pled in Presbyteries that Evidence should be first had before any Attestation of this kind be signed, you know, *Andropodius*, who they are that commonly oppose such Motions, I will not take upon me to say whether any of those Gentlemen may exclude from that punctual Obedience which they insist for, Regulations that come recommended to us likewise by a higher Authority. I cannot help stumbling upon the Word higher, when I am speaking of the Authority of God himself. But call it lower, Sir: I do not see, for my Part how this should annul our Obligation of Obedience to an Authority which by itself is thought to be of so much Weight. For surely is could not be thought to be voiding an Act of Assembly, tho' one should show that a Presbytery had enacted the same Regulation before them.

As for you, our younger Brethren, if you be really and uniformly more punctual in your Obedience to the standing Acts and Constitutions of this Church, than those whom you so loudly accuse of Disobedience, I shall own, Sir, that *there is a new Thing under the Sun*, and it would be one of the strongest Confirmations I ever met with of *Worthington's* Doctrine, that the World is growing better, as it grows older. But if this is so, is it not at least extremely unlucky for you, that the only Quarrel you have with us, is because we will not break one of the standing

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Regulations of this Church? A Regulation which you cannot repeal without the Consent of the Majority of Presbyteries, and which we were urged to comply with, not by your Kind of Arguments, but from Motives that to us are infinitely stronger, *viz.* as we regard the Glory of God, and the Edification of the Body of Christ? Is it at all consistent with your Pretensions, that you should not only trample upon this Act yourselves, not only insist on our doing the like, but that you should even make our Disobedience to it, unrepealed as it is, a Term of Ministerial Communion?

I confess this was none of the Things I had in View, when upon the settling of our Articles, I stipulated for Liberty to complain of the Dishonesty of some of your Arguments, nor have they yet occurred in the Course of our communing. But what can we think, Sir, of such inconsistent Conduct, as the making a great Fuss for Obedience, by many who would take it as an Affront if they were supposed to have so bad a Taste, as even to look into those Regulations which they contend so hotly for Obedience to? especially when the very Instance in which this Obedience is demanded with so high a Hand, and with so noisy and importunate a Roar, is itself the directest Disobedience to a Regulation enacted by the supreme Authority for which this Regard is cried for, and recommended in Terms, than which none could more strongly and emphatically express the Sense our Superiors had of the Importance of observing it, and the valuable or rather invaluable Interests that would suffer through its Non-observance? There is nothing more ordinary in human Affairs, than for a Pretence to be used of something that will raise a plausible Cry, while, in the mean Time, it is quite another Thing that they who are loudest in the Cry, are really concerned for at the Bottom of their Hearts. Who were ever more seditiously disposed than the *Jews*, who cried out against the Apostle *Paul* as a *pestilent Fellow, and a Mover of Sedition*? Were they really, think you, those zealous Friends to *Caesar*, which they pretended to be, in order to procure the Murder of our Saviour? Was it really a sincere Concern for the Authority of the Laws, that moved *Daniel's* Enemies to insist for his Execution? Or do you imagine that it was the same Motive, or Pride and Resentment at *Merdecai*, that moved *Haman* to seek the Destruction of the *Jews*?

AN. Pray, Sir, What Motives can you suspect us to be acted by?

TH. Truly, Sir, I do not suspect any Thing that is extraordinary. If you will reflect upon the common Course of Things
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in the World, you will find that it would be no unusual or impossible Effect, if some who had mightily at Heart, only the establishing a certain Method of settling Vacancies, which does not use to meet with Approbation in this Church, finding many of their Brethren averse to it, and imagining it was in their Power to compel them into it, should be led by the authoritative Means which alone they think fit to use, with the Unsuccessfulness of them upon Trial, to raise a Cry against that Disobedience which perhaps they did not expect, and to cry against it, so long and so loud, that they at last come to be persuaded themselves, that there is more in it than they at first imagined, and that what is really but the secondary is the primary Object of their Zeal. All this, Sir, tho' it should happen, I hope you'll own, would be no very new or surprizing Thing.

§ 12. AN. But suppose there were something of this, Sir, (for we do not pretend an Exemption from human Infirmities, as I presume neither do you) what is all this to the Argument? You must give me leave, *Theodulus*, to say, that you have as yet returned no direct Answer to my Objection.

TH. I do not pretend, Sir, that I have. But what would you think, *Andropodius*, if you should furnish the Answer yourself? And in Order to this, let me put a Case to you. Suppose you were a Servant, and your Master, otherwise perhaps a reasonable, honest Sort of Man, but unhappily of depraved Notions in Trade, should order you to assist himself or a Friend of his, in Smuggling run Goods: would you obey such Orders, or not?

AN. I confess I would be very much straitened. Suppose I should refuse? as I believe really, I would.

TH. If you did not, you know, you would break not only the Laws of God, but the Laws of Men, both civil and ecclesiastical, the General Assembly of this Church having prohibited such a Practice, as well as the Parliament of *Great Britain*, and represented the great evil and heinous Guilt of it in very strong Colours. All this I doubt not you would represent to your Master, and not only beg to be excused such a Piece of Service yourself, but likewise advise him, with all due Deference, to abstain from such illegal Practices. But if after all, he should still adhere to his own Opinion, which is extremely possible, and insist for Obedience to his positive and express Order, pray what would you say to him?

AN. Why, I would tell him that it was a Condition plainly understood on all Hands, when I engaged in his Service, that the Orders he imposed on me to execute, were to be consistent with the Laws of the Land; and that I would refuse nothing which

which was permitted by them either for him to require, or for me to do.

TH. All this you know, Sir, only substituting the Laws of God for the Laws of the Land, has been represented by the two refractory Servants, the Presbyteries of *Linlithgow* and *Dunfermline*, to their Master, the General Assembly, with this peculiar Advantage, that whereas it is not supposed in your Case, that your Master himself had ever so far concurred with his Superiors as to prohibit and discharge all his Servants, in the most earnest and pathetick Manner, to give any Assistance to Smugglers: The General Assembly has expressly discharged all their Servants to be concerned in the intruding of a Minister into any Parish contrary to the Will of the Congregation, and made a publick Declaration, that this is, and has been the constant Principle of this Church. And therefore so far as publick Faith can be pleaded we have still the Advantage of you. Yet the Master, you know, in the one Case did insist after all. So we may suppose in the other Case, and that he should use your own Arguments, and tell you, that if a Servant was to be Judge how far his Orders were agreeable to the Laws, he may break up his Family, that this is denying those first Principles by which Masters and Servants are united in Families, and establishing a Maxim that will justify all Manner of Licentiousness and Disorder.

AN. Tho' I would not absolutely engage to execute every Order that a Master might impose; yet I do think it would be acting an inconsistent Part to eat a Man's Bread, and refuse to obey his Commands. And therefore if they were such as I could not comply with, I would leave the Master's Family altogether.

TH. That is, you would throw up your Service in a Pet, and leave the Family in still greater Disorder and Confusion, and bring unnecessary Inconveniences upon them. It seems I am moderate in Disobedience in Comparison of what you would be. If once a Command should be imposed upon you that you had a Scruple to obey, you would not only refuse to obey the unreasonable Command, but every other, how reasonable so ever that came from the Master. Which of the two, think you, would act the most dutiful and decent Part: He that should tell his Master: You are a wicked Man, I will serve you no longer; or he that should say; If you think it proper to insist in this matter, I must run the Risk of being turned off rather than comply. But I most humbly beg your Pardon, and promise if you will be so good as to excuse me in this Particular, I shall serve you with so much the greater Diligence and Faithfulness in every Thing else, that is consistent with my Duty to higher Superiors in Heaven

ven or Earth? But you do not seem to attend to your own Objection, Sir, when you make such wild proposals. And therefore as you formerly did me, so I must now keep you closer to the Point. For the Question is not, how Families may be dissolved or dispersed? or how Undutifulness in Servants may be increased; but how Families can be kept together, upon your Principles: Now, Sir, If Servants may disobey, or according to your Principles, if they may not only disobey, but run away too into the Bargain; is not this an End to all Family Government at once? Must not the human Species give up all Manner of Society? and every Individual make the best shift he can in Solitude?

AN. Why truly, Sir, I must own that as long as there is so much Imperfection among us all, we must lay our Account with some Inconveniences in all human Affairs. And while different Superiors may clash with one another, I believe none that has a Superior above him ought to be so rigid and peremptory in his Orders as becomes only that unerring Being who is Supreme over all.

TH. You now begin to open the true Solution of the Difficulty, which presses your own Principles more than it does ours. And if you will reflect a little, you will find that you have proceeded upon two Mistakes, both of them arising from your Management of this Argument, not so much in a way of strict reasoning, as by extravagant Flights and Figures of Rhetorick, which serve as well to disguise, as to discover, or even illustrate, the Truth. You first make the Imperfection of Creature Government, or the least Inconveniency or Difficulty attending it, equivalent to annihilating it altogether. And then these inconveniences are heightened and aggravated most unreasonably, and beyond all Bounds. To begin with the last,

If an earthly Superior should happen to issue Orders that are thought by the Subject to be inconsistent with higher Obligations, and he should thereupon have a Scruple to obey them; this may no doubt occasion some Difficulty as to the Execution of such Orders. But is this Difficulty any thing near so great as it is represented to be? what a number of Resources have all supreme Powers even in human Governments? In the first place, if the Scruple proceeds from Ignorance and appears to be founded upon Mistakes, they who have a more extensive Knowledge can remove these mistakes, and by bestowing a little Instruction upon their Inferiors may have it in their Power to convince them of the groundlessness of any Scruple they may happen to entertain. And this is especially the Province of ecclesiastick Superiors, and what is in a particular Manner to be expected from them in such Cases.

Cases. Indeed without satisfying the Consciences of Men, they should not so much as expect, or even wish to be obeyed.

In the second Place, If there is sufficient Evidence that the Pretence is but affected, all supreme Powers have a right to inflict such Censure or Punishment, as will probably compel those who are acted only by low and selfish Motives, to do what they must be conscious is their Duty to do. We never made a Question whether the Assembly in deposing Mr. *Gillespie* did any Thing but what they had a Right to do; if by having a Right, be meant, that they were the proper Judges of that Question, to whom the Decision of it belonged. If the King and Parliament should lay a Tax of 16 Shillings in the Pound upon Land, they do nothing but what they have a Right, in this Sense of the Word, to do. And yet many who claim no such Right may be able to show, that this would be a wrong Exercise of that Right. Even *Hobbs* himself allows, that this Right may be abused. How far it was so in the Case just now mentioned may be worth while to consider, but must be left to another Time.

Thirdly, If there is no Appearance of the Pretence being affected, and the Subject can neither be persuaded nor compelled to execute an Order of the higher Powers, are the Rulers, even in this Case, without Resource? Even *Hobbs* himself, Sir, suggests one; namely, that when some have a Scruple to execute a particular Order, there are not wanting others who have no Scruple about the Matter, and to whom the higher Power may have Recourse without the least Danger of the Service being unperformed*. This is what *Grotius* expressly declares to be the Duty of the higher Powers in such a Case†. This is what the *British* Government since the Revolution have paid a sacred Regard to, making particular Acts of Parliament exempting such of their Subjects as were known to have Scruples about Things that occasioned none to others, from doing those very Things that the rest were left under an Obligation to do, as in the Case of

* Nam etsi negavero, nec jus imperii frustra est, cum alii haberi possint, qui id facere jussi non recusabunt. --- Multi alii casus sunt in quibus cum mandata aliis quidem factu inhonesta sunt, aliis autem non sunt, obedientia ab his praestari, ab illis negari jure potest; atque id salvo jure quod Imperanti concessum est absolutum. Nam illi in nullo casu eos qui obedientiam negabunt interficiendi jus adimitur. Caeterum qui sic interficiunt, etsi jure concessio ab eo qui habet, tamen eo jure aliter atque recta ratio postulat utentes peccant contra Leges naturales, id est contra Deum. *Vid. p. 34.*

† Quod si subditorum animis per causae expositionem satis nequeat fieri, omnino officium erit boni magistratus tributa ipsis potius extraordinaria imperare quam operam militarem: praesertim ubi non defuturi sunt alii qui militent. *Vid. p. 64.*

of the Quakers: And even chusing rather to leave some Services unperformed than to insist upon a thing that they find the Subject has a real Scruple about, as in the Case of the Ministers of the Church of *Scotland* about a dozen years ago. This is what every Government who have a regard for Conscience will carefully attend to. And particularly this is the Course that the Church of *Scotland* was wont to take in the very Case which has occasioned the present Dispute. And surely, Sir, if there is a majority that have voted for any Measure, there cannot be wanting Hands enough to put it in Execution. And I should think that where there are some who think it so right a thing as to give their Votes for it, and others who think it would be a Sin in themselves to put it in Execution, there can be no Difficulty in the Choice that any Superiors indeed, but especially ecclesiastick Superiors have to make.

Fourthly, If the Service be of such a Nature as occasions a very universal Scruple about the Execution of it, and even those who voted for it, are unwilling to execute their own Sentence, perhaps it would be better, Sir, in most Cases of that Sort, that it lay unexecuted. But then I take this to be so far from being a real Inconvenience, that on the contrary, I consider it as a most necessary Check upon fallible Creature Governors. Mr. *Baxter* in his Holy Commonwealth, says, "That if the Injustice of a Command be notorious, or such as you may well discover without transgressing your Bounds in the Enquiry, in such Cases Princes should find no Executioners." And he observes, that "'tis the legal Way of restraining Kings from Injustice, to punish their Executioners that are Subjects, that others may fear obeying them in Wickedness." I believe there is no Body that has any Acquaintance with the History of the World but would wish that this Difficulty which the Rulers of it may sometimes be exposed to were greater than it is, instead of being less. It would be a strange Government, and they would be very odd Measures that are pursued, if the supreme Power were reduced to the Necessity of suffering a Sentence to ly unexecuted thro' a Scarcity of Hands in so corrupt a World, that are willing to do a dirty Job, or to perform a disapproved Piece of Service. Happy, many a Time, had it been both for Rulers and their Subjects, had there been a greater Want than there is, of Executioners of such Orders.

But then, Sir, let this Difficulty be greater than it really is; pray tell me, by what Rule, I do not say of Rhetorick, but of Logick, do you make the least Rub of this Sort to which the political Machine is exposed, and which is the necessary, and perhaps a convenient Effect of its essential Imperfection, to be

an universal stopping of all its various Motions at once? Cannot a Door in turning meet with the least Impediment, but it must be unhinged, and rendered for ever useless? You tell us, if one Command is allowed to be disobeyed, there is an End of all Government; the wildest Anarchy and Confusion must be the immediate Consequence. This bombast Sort of Fustian, Sir, may, for ought I know, be the Language of the Stage. But if you be in Earnest to transact about the real Affairs or Business of common Life, it is not, I think, an unreasonable Demand, that you would throw off the Buskin, and talk with us upon more equal Terms. If you thus swell your Dialect with hyperbolical Expressions, we will really, as Dr. *Tillotson* observes, want a Dictionary to help us to understand your Language, and to know the true intrinsic Value of the Phrase in Fashion. And I doubt not but sober People, who are unaccustomed with such high Flights of Oratory, would hardly at first believe at what a low Rate these lofty Strains and Expressions do really pass in current Payment.

If Rhetoricians could condescend to talk with sober People upon an ordinary Footing, and according to any Rules of strict Reasoning, may we not ask, what is the Meaning of these figurative Expressions? Or, do you really intend them to be understood literally? That in Fact, as soon as any Instance of Disobedience happens, or is excused, neither Commands nor the Executions of them can, from that fatal Moment, go on in any other Instance? When you tell us, There is an End of Government, Society is dissolved; The Parliament and Assembly may both disband, &c. and that with so decisive a Brow, as is usual upon these Occasions; we plain Folks who cannot, either with a good Countenance, or a good Conscience, raise our Style to such ranting Phrases, especially when we are pretending to reason, and do not converse much with Gentlemen of that Dialect, cannot help sometimes betraying so much Simplicity, as to reflect whether this has ever been really and literally the Case. Innumerable Instances, we know, have happened of Disobedience to the Commands of earthly Superiors, but as far as our Observation can go, we find all the Engines of Government, do in Fact work just as well, and as easily, and move on as smoothly after such Rubs as before, especially when the Disobedience flows from Conscience, and a regard to higher Authority. Nay, we imagine it appears from Experience, that Government continues to operate with greater Facility and Success, when the last sort of Instances are overlooked and excused, than when the most punctual Compliance is insisted on with the outmost Rigidity. When *Jether*, *Gideon's* eldest Son, even from a lower Mo-

Motive, disobeyed the express Order of his Father, the chief Magistrate of his Country, and was excused too, did the Government of *Gideon* immediately cease, and all Things run into Disorder and Confusion? Or was even that particular Service unperformed? When *Saul's* Guards refused to execute his bloody Sentence, and their Disobedience was overlooked too, did *Saul*, from that Moment, lose all his Authority? or did even that very Sentence continue unexecuted? Did not the King still rule, and that with Rigour too? Were not his Orders still issued as formerly? And did not his Guards, as well as other Officers, obey them rather too punctually, particularly in the Persecution of *David*, if that could be considered as of any Necessity to the Subsistence of the Society? Was *Abasuerus's* Government any better established when *Mordecai's* Disobedience to the Command of the King was about to be resented with the most exemplary and intimidating Vengeance, than it was afterwards when the same *Mordecai* not only escaped Punishment, but was advanced to the highest Dignities and Preferments? Was the *British* Government overturned, when some Ministers of this Church, a few Years ago, had a Scruple about executing a solemn Order of the whole legislative Power, and were winked at too, tho' the Service itself was thereby so far neglected? Who, of all his Majesty's Subjects, were more zealous and active in supporting so excellent a Constitution, and so amiable a Government, when, a few Years after, it came to be threatned not with imaginary or rhetorical but real Distress, and that partly perhaps from a grateful Sense of the Lenity so properly, and so lately exercised towards themselves, and of the regard shown upon all Occasions to conscientious Scruples? Would you yourself, *Andropodius*, really and literally break up your Family, think you, and never more pretend to seek the least Assistance from a Servant, if you had for once yielded to some conscientious Scruple, of one that was in all other Respects very faithful, honest and obedient? Upon the whole, Sir, as your Words, beyond all peradventure, are most unnaturally swollen above any Sense that I can have the least Comprehension of; I wish, if you have any Meaning, that you would condescend to express it in a Dialect that is more level to my Capacity.

AN. You're grown mighty squeamish, *Theodulus*, in your Taste of Language. I wish you may not turn *Quaker* upon our Hands. We may happen sometimes, as young Folks are apt to be hot and lively, to express ourselves with Strength and Energy. But I should think no Body can be at a Loss for the Meaning of the Expressions that have given you so much Offence, namely, that your Principles have a Tendency to introduce A-

narchy and Confusion, that in so far as they prevail, they must encourage and promote Disobedience, and consequently distress Government in Proportion to the Extent of their Influence.

TH. Really, Sir, I cannot, upon this Occasion, admire your Skill in the Art of Persuasion. If you had first endeavoured to establish a Connexion between our Principles and Anarchy, by something like a sober Argument, and then fallen a declaiming upon the Subject, and in the Warmth of a Peroration, raised your Style with some hyperbolical Figures, they might, in that Case, have passed unheeded, and for my Part, I would not have taken any Notice of them. But in an Attempt of sober and strict reasoning, when the only Shadow of an Argument, that you have any Pretence of, is nothing but an acknowledged Hyperbole, and this Hyperbole varied into a Multiplicity of different Phrases is seriously given into a Court under the Form of Reasons of Dissent, which were drawn, if not coolly, at least after a most extraordinary length of Time was asked, given, and taken for the Composition of them, how it is possible, Sir, in that Case to avoid observing it, and enquiring for the naked Sense, stript of those extravagant Figures in which it is clothed or rather disguised?

What would you say to me if I should make a great Noise against you, for throwing a Stone out of your Hand up into the Air, and should seriously give you this sole Reason for it, that the Stone when thus separated from the Earth, will draw the Earth after it, out of its Orbit? Why, I believe you will not deny that it has a Tendency to do so, and in Proportion to the Prevalence of its Influence it actually does so.

AN. I dare say you are sensible how Ridiculous that would be; for besides the extreme Insensibility of any such Influence the Re-action of my Foot upon the Earth in throwing the Stone would be abundantly sufficient to balance all the Effect that could be produced by the Separation.

TH. And do you perceive no Re-action of our Principles contributing to the Stability of Government? I am sure the one is more obliged to our Doctrine, when you reflect upon the whole of it, than the other is to the Pressure of your Feet. For pray, Sir, what is our Doctrine? Is it any Thing else but that absolute and unexceptionable Supremacy of Conscience? The necessity of a punctual Obedience to all Superiors in Heaven or Earth in their due Subordination, and according to the real Gradation that actually obtains among them, the whole founded on the Authority of the supreme Being? And in Proportion as this Principle is rivetted in the Hearts of Men, does it not put our Obedience upon a surer footing than any other it can stand upon?

on? In so far as the Influence of it really prevails, an active Obedience to every acknowledged Superior, tho' a subordinate one, in every Thing that is not inconsistent with the Command of God, and even in Cases of that sort, a passive Submission is infinitely better secured, and may more certainly be depended upon, than upon any other Principles whatever. And if once this solid Foundation was subverted or undermined, the whole Fabric of Government would indeed be in a very tottering Condition. If once Men are taught that it is right, or that it does not Hazard their eternal Damnation, willfully to do in any Case, what they think God forbids, I would fain know what other Security we have for Obedience to Rulers, besides the Prospect of temporal Conveniences or Inconveniences in the Matter? And is this a Security any Thing proportionable to the other, especially when there is nothing in our Doctrine to hinder both from being included in their due Subordination? To this Purpose is what Mr. *Alsop* says in the same precise Cause that I am defending. "This, says he, will destroy the Magistrate's Power also in a while, for whose sake the Contrivance is pretended; for when Subjects are once instructed so far to debauch Conscience, that though we judge an Action sinful, yet we may do it, it will lead to this easy Inference, that though we judge the Magistrates Commands lawful, yet we may disobey them: For as we say, when Men have got a hole in their Hearts, one concern will drop through after another without regret.*"

Sir, it is not only the Professors of Religion who are sensible of the Advantage that Government receives by the Subjects being taught to obey not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake. This the very *Atheists* are so sensible of, that they have been thereby induced to suspect that Religion was originally but a State Engine and a politick Device invented at first by some great Prince or Minister of State to keep People in Awe and Order, and that, being found by Experience to be so excellent an Instrument of Government, it has always been cherished and kept up. Which (as Dr. *Tillotson* observes in considering this Plea of theirs) is a Supposition that grants the Opinion of a God to conduce very much to the support of Government and Order in the World. But how little would it conduce to this purpose if an Opinion did at the same Time prevail, that it may, in any Case, be no Sin, but a Duty to disobey what appears to us to be the Command of God?

Nay so forcible is Truth, that it frequently extorts from its greatest Enemies some Degree of that Homage which is due to it. It is pleasant enough to observe Dr. *Parker* one of the Cham-

Champions on your Side of the Question, who maintains with great Earnestness and Elegancy of Words that the "Use and Exercise of Conscience will certainly overthrow all Government, and fill the World with Confusion," yet in another Section of the same Chapter †, He shows with the same flowing Eloquence how entirely Government depends upon Conscience. He had taken a very odd conceit in his Head, it seems, that the best Argument for Liberty of Conscience, was a belief of the indifferency or rather Imposture of all Religions, which would be just as good Sense, as to say, that the best Argument for allowing the Negros in the *West Indies* Liberty from working on the Lord's Day, was because they had no Worship to pay to any supreme Being, and did not Regard one Day more than another. This Crotchet however having taken Possession of his Imagination, he takes Occasion from thence to discourse of the use of Religion and Conscience in the Government of Affairs in the World, and proves in many Words, "That Conscience unto God, with a Regard to future eternal Rewards or Punishments, is the great Ligament of human Society, the Security of Government, the strongest bond of Laws, and only support of Rule, without which every Man would first and last be guided by mere self Interest, which would reduce all Power and Authority to meer Force and Violence."

You see how ready our greatest Enemies are to march to our Assistance in maintaining this Post against any Attack. I think I could depend upon yourself as an auxiliary in Case of need, and therefore as there is no Occasion for any farther Re-inforcements on our Part, I shall only add that it is extremely natural to expect, and what constant Experience discovers to be the Fact, that those who stand in need of any Indulgence from their Superiors in a particular Point where their Consciences are straitened, are usually from that very Motive determined to be of all Subjects the most Obsequious, and the most punctual in their Obedience with Respect to every Thing where their Consciences leave them at Liberty. The less that they can yield in one Case, the more are they disposed to yield in every other. I might illustrate this Observation from the Example of the primitive Christians and others whose Disobedience is recorded in the Scripture, from that of the *French* Protestants, and the *English* Nonconformists in King Charles II's Time. But I hope I need go no farther than ourselves, and am pretty confident, that if you'll reflect with impartiality, you may soon be convinced from the Regard that is usually paid to most of the Acts and Constitutions of this Church, by Ministers and People on each Side of this Question, of the

Truth

† Discourse of Ecclesiast. Polity, Ch. 5.

Truth of my Observation, with this Addition, that a Carelessness and Negligence of Punctuality in Obedience, in ordinary Cases, is on the other Hand, a natural Effect likewise of a Consciencefulness that Things can never come to Extremities where there is no Scruple about complying with any Thing that can be insisted on at last, rather than run any Hazard upon that Account.

§. 13. AN. You do not seem, *Theodulus*, sufficiently to apprehend wherein the Strength of our reasoning lies. For the Subsistence, or at least the Vigour and Activity of Government, does not so directly and immediately depend upon a punctual Observance of such general Kind of Regulations, which you may perhaps allude to, as upon the Execution of a particular Decision, wherein the Rights of particular Persons are concerned. For in this last Case, there is evidently a more sensible Stop in the Wheels of Government, and a more direct inconsistency with the Operation of its Power. Tho' I should, for Example, prefer sometimes the Entertainment of a friend to my Attendance on a Diet for Prayer and privy Censures in the Presbytery, is this to be compared with refusing to ordain one in a Parish which is found to belong to him by the last Resort in the Society, after the Dispute has been carried as far as it can go? Here, the Right of a particular Person is infringed, and the Relief given by the Government instituted in Society becomes ineffectual; there, no Injury is done to another. In the one Case, there is no direct Attempt to overturn or undo what has been enacted by the Society; whereas in the other, a Decision of the supreme Power is, as far as we can, in a manner repealed, and a Decision made no Decision. For this Reason, to be sure, it is that, as I have observed to you already, tho' you have not thought fit to take any notice of it, there is no such thing in any civil Court of Judicature, as a Clerk ever pretending any Scruple to extract, or a Preses to sign a Decision of the Court, tho' he might have reasoned against it, and opposed it with all his Might, and still continues to think it most iniquitous. Otherwise it is easy to perceive that Men's Properties would become altogether uncertain, and that relief for the giving of which in Case of litigation, Government is contrived, would be quite precarious.

TH. I am sure, *Andropodius*, you do not apprehend the Force of my Reasoning, if you do still seriously insist upon any such Distinction. The only Question that a Subject can want to be resolved in, is, Whether the Thing commanded, be lawful, or sinful in him to do; not but that there are matters of greater and less importance. But, if the Thing required of him be lawful, he is to do it; if it appears to him to be sinful, he is undoubtedly not to do it, Sir, be what it will. This is a Circum-

cumstance which according to my Divinity, however the matter may stand in Law, cannot be ballanced by any Consideration whatever. And let me tell you, that whether Divinity or Law be admitted as the Rule, even in an ecclesiastical Judicatory, that which bids fairest for being the Rule at a greater Tribunal than any on Earth, must be the Rule with all such as keep that grand Tribunal constantly in View. If the Consideration of any Circumstance, or any Consequence, be of Weight enough to satisfy me that it is no Sin, I am bound to obey, be it a general Regulation, or a particular Decision. Whether this or any other Circumstance be sufficient to turn the Ballance of a doubtful Mind, in the Case of those violent Settlements, which occasion the Scruples that have given Rise to this Debate, shall be considered when we come to that Part of the Subject. But will you, on the general Argument, where you seem to Place your Strength, pretend to maintain, that the single Consideration of a Thing's being a particular Decision of private or personal Rights, is, 'of itself, sufficient Evidence that it is lawful for me to execute it, be it what it will? or that no such Decision can be made, which it would be sinful to execute? Without having Recourse to any arbitrary Suppositions, you'll find some of the Instances of approved Disobedience, that have been already mentioned out of the Scripture to be of this Sort. And if we had that Leisure now, which I hope we may find some other Time, I could even cloy you with Instances of ecclesiastical Decisions in particular Causes Obedience to which is, and must be universally disapproved, and Disobedience approved.

As for the Inconveniences which you are afraid may follow from this Doctrine, I have already shewed you, they are no other but what may reasonably be expected from the essential Imperfection of all human Government, and infinitely less than what would flow from the contrary. Indeed the Inconveniences are such as do chiefly fall upon the scrupulous Subject; as it seldom happens that Governors who are guilty of sinful Impositions, have the Charity or the humanity to admit a conscientious Scruple for an Excuse, Whether it be a sincere one, or a meer affected Pretence. Because this last is possible, there must always be lodged in Rulers a Power to punish it. And it is not at all surprising if they should generally incline to suspect this to be the Case, as they cannot be supposed to have any Scruple themselves. The *British* Government since the Revolution is one of those rare Exceptions that do honour to human Nature. Would to God, *Andropodius*, that you, who I believe rejoice both in the happy Constitution, and the mild Administration of that Government, would learn in the Exercise of what little Power you have, to imi-

imitate such a glorious Example. How far the Pretence of Conscience among us at present may be concluded to be affected or not, is a Question that must be delayed till another Opportunity. But whether Rulers do or do not chuse to overwhelm those who are, or pretend to be straitened in their Consciences about Obedience, with that Vengeance they must always have in their Hands, 'tis certain that, in all ordinary Governments, and especially in that of the Church of *Scotland*, neither the Activity of Government in general, nor the private Rights of particular Persons can suffer beyond redress by the Obstinacy of Individuals. There can be no want of Hands to execute a Sentence, which requires so many votes to make it a final Decision.

I cannot help however observing to you upon this Occasion, that I take it to be one of the bad Consequences (perhaps among other good ones) of our having so many Lawyers in the General Assembly, that the Settlement of our Vacancies is so much considered in the Court in the View of private Rights of particular Persons. Many Gentlemen who have a seat in that House are so much accustomed to other Courts, where the Matters litigated come under no other View, that 'tis little wonder, all Things considered, if they look upon the planting of a vacant Parish in no other Light, but as the Disposal of so much temporal Property as the Emoluments of the Office amount to. This, I acknowledge there is in the Thing; and if there was nothing else in it, (as I believe there is little more in a neighbouring Church from whence you borrow the Pattern of your *Altare Damasenum*) I assure you, Sir, I would be a great deal less concerned about the Matter. But if the promoting or hindering the Edification of Christians, if the converting or hardening of Sinners, if the extending and establishing the real Interest of Christ's Kingdom or that of Satan, if the eternal Salvation or Damnation of precious and immortal Souls, in a Word, if the Glory of God and the Edification of the Body of Christ be, as our Assembly once thought, Objects that are directly influenced by the Determination of such Causes; if these are Objects whose very existence is not altogether Chimerical; and if they are affected to such a Degree as we may afterwards consider, by the Decisions we are speaking of; I should think it no disproportionable Regard, if these were the principal Views that a Church Judicatory, as an ecclesiastical Court, acting in the Name and by the Authority of Jesus Christ, should have, in the Discussion and Decision of such Affairs, and if the other were allowed to have but a very inconsiderable Weight in Comparison, especially when it is considered how extensive the Consequences of such Decisions sometimes are beyond the particular Congregation immediately concerned. And if this be so,

I will not stick to say that the disregarding such a general Regulation as that of the Assembly 1736, is a more important Act of Disobedience than the not concurring in any Settlement that has ever yet been scrupled among us.

You have twice mentioned, as if you laid no small stress upon it, how common it is in civil Courts, even for those that have ever so keenly opposed a particular Decision, to make no Scruple after it is once passed, about concurring in the Execution of it. I have had the happiness, Sir, during the course of my Life to be so little Conversant in the Business of these Courts, that I am a very improper Judge, how rare a Thing any Conscientious Scruple may be among the Judges or Officers belonging to them. But if you could convince me that a Scruple upon as good Grounds as some Presbyteries have lately proceeded upon, is a very rare Thing in the World, I believe it might operate in a Way very different from your Expectation: For if I were to take my Measures of the goodness of an Action, not from the Scripture, which requires me not to be conformed to this World, but from the common Practice of Mankind, I believe I would be oftner led wrong than right. So that the uncommonness of a Practice would be a better evidence to me of the goodness of it, than the frequency of it would be. One Gentleman belonging to the Law gave us such a Specimen of the Pliancy of his Conscience, that upon his Principles, he could have had no Scruple to cut the Throat of the whole Assembly for no fault, provided he had Orders for it from Men to whose Authority he had no Objection: Tho' I make no Question but, upon Trial it would appear that the Gentleman has more humanity in his Temper than in his Principles. But if we are to take his Declaration as being made in the Name of his Profession, it must be owned that their compliance is boundless. However as there is no set of Men whatever that are perfectly uniform either in their Principles or Practice, and there is no doubt but there are Judges and Officers of the Law who would not willfully indulge themselves in any Thing that they knew to be contrary to the Will of God, I shall for their sakes, make those two farther Observations upon this Matter, namely, that there is a very great difference in the Degrees of Activity in the Execution of a Sentence, and a very great difference in the Degrees of moral Evil that there may be in wrong Sentences themselves. Both which may help in some Measure to reconcile this Fact with the soundest Principles upon this Subject.

First, There is a very great difference in the Degrees of Activity in the Execution of a Sentence; insomuch that one who has no Scruple at the lowest Degree, may for all that, be most conscientiously supposed to have a very strong Scruple at the highest.

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The signing of the Minutes, I take to be one of the smallest. The truth is, it is nothing but attesting what is already notoriously known to be a Fact, *viz.* that the Procedure of the Court was in reality such as is there contained. Might not the Preses of a criminal Court go that length in the Case of a Sentence which he had argued against as barbarously cruel and contrary to all the Laws of humanity, who yet might have an invincible Scruple against executing it with his own Hands? And even in the Case of a gross injustice with Relation to Property, if the Preses who viewed it in that Light, were obliged to any act of religious Worship that supposed the Justice of the Decision, for Example, to conclude the Sederunt, with thanking God for assisting the Court to make so wise and righteous a Decision, and praying for God's Blessing upon what they had done, may not one be supposed to have a Scruple at this, tho' he had none at signing the Minutes?

But in the second Place, there is a much greater Difference still in the Degrees of Evil that may be in wrong Sentences themselves, that may occasion very different Freedom or Scrupulosity in the same Person about the Execution of them. The very same Person for Example that had no scruple about the most active Execution of a Sentence which he had opposed, whereby his Neighbour was deprived of an inconsiderable Property in a Case that appeared somewhat dubious, might nevertheless have a Scruple even to sign the Minutes of a Court that had condemned to a cruel Death a King as good as some make *Charles I.* to have been. If *Nicodemus* or *Joseph of Arimathea* had sat in a Court that condemned the Son of God to be crucified, would they, think you, have had no Scruple even to sign such an impious Sentence? not to speak now of any farther Activity in executing it. And therefore although one had no difficulty about more or less Degrees of active Obedience, in a Case where all the Injury he apprehended was done to his Neighbour related only to his temporal Property, which is confessedly under the Regulation of human Laws, and depends, in a great Measure, upon the will of the Society; this would not be at all inconsistent with the very same Person's being very much straitened in the Case of a Sentence which, in his Apprehension, does an Injury of a spiritual and eternal Nature to those Souls whose Salvation he is bound to promote, which he looks upon as directly tending to rend the Body of Jesus Christ and to destroy them for whom he died; if one under those Apprehensions was put upon the directest and highest Degree of Activity in the execution of such a Sentence, and that in the name and Authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom in his Members, and to the interest of whose Kingdom the Injury appears to be done, and in an immediate

diate Act of Religious Worship too, where, in a most especial Manner, whatever is not of Faith, is Sin. Is there really no Difference, Sir, to be perceived between such a Case as this, and the directest Execution of a Sentence concerning temporal Property, not to say the Preses's signing the Minute of Procedure only in a civil Court, even when he has differed in his sentiments from the Majority of the Judges?

AN. I own to you, *Theodulus*, that the only Refuge you have left me upon the general Point, is in our Doctrine of leaving Society, which you threaten to drive me out of too. And indeed some Hints that you have already dropt, and especially the Reflection upon particular Instances of Disobedience in Scripture or Church History, make me a little suspicious of it. But tho' the general Point were quite yielded, I believe you'll be sensible that you have yet a great deal to do. For I have many Things to object against the Application of the Doctrine to the present Circumstances of this Church. And if you had never so much to say for yourselves, yet as you allow that the last Resort in every Society must have a Power to punish Disobedience, and we have at least as good a Right to judge for our selves, as you have to judge for yourselves, I own I do not yet see how you can, consistently with yourself, deny us the Exercise of this Right.

TH. I doubt not, Sir, but by this Time you have got enough of it, for once. And as I cannot stay longer with you at this Time without Inconvenience, we must needs delay the other Branches of the Subject till another Opportunity. But if you'll be so good as to repay my Visit soon, we shall then endeavour, the best way we can, to discuss what remains.

AN. I assure you, Sir, if it please God, it shall not be long before I break up your quarters.

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F I N I S.

APPENDIX.

Addressed to the Author of the JUST VIEW
of the CONSTITUTION of the Church of
Scotland.

S I R,

AFTER the foregoing Sheets were printed off, your Pamphlet was sent to me, with an earnest Desire that some Remarks upon it might accompany this Conference. It gave me no small Pleasure to find that among the fiery Charioteers of this Church, who have the Whip in their Hands, and who have hitherto thought fit only to drive us like Beasts of Burden, there are some at least, who have the Condescension to treat us like reasonable Creatures, to argue with us as Brethren, instead of beating us like Slaves. I hope Men of Candour and Ingenuity will at length be brought to perceive that in the controverted Matters that now divide the Church of Scotland, the *via examinatis* is a more suitable, and a more Protestant Way of determining them, than the infallible Church's *via autoritatis*. The Pleasure which this Alteration of Conduct afforded me was not a little increased, upon finding that you was willing to argue with us upon other Principles than those of Mr. Hobbs, that you expressly allowed *Cognitionem de bono et malo pertinere ad singulas non tantum in statu naturali, sed etiam in statu civili*. See Hobbs, in p. 144. I wish the Reasons of Dissent had not set out with what looks so like an Adoption of the contrary Doctrine of Mr. Hobbs, and continued to build upon the same Foundation. You are the first Person on that Side of the Question that ever I found so frankly yielding that important Truth, even since the Publication of the Answers to the Reasons of Dissent, upon which I heartily congratulate you, and Theodulus upon the Accomplishment of his Prophecy, at the top of p. 32. and 34. But as the Dissenters have never cleared themselves of the contrary Doctrine, after being so expressly and publickly charged with it in the Answers, it is to be presumed that they admit the Charge, and that they still adhere to it. Surely you cannot be such a Stranger to the publick and private Reasonings on your own Side of the Question, as to be insensible of the Necessity or Seasonableness of

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supporting by Arguments, what you have so explicitly yielded : That " If a Man, after having been at all due Pains to inform " himself, and having weighed the Consequences on each Side, " shall be fully convinced, that he cannot, with a good Conscience concur in any particular Settlement, without all doubt he " ought not to do it. For it is in the Power of no Society under Heaven to force any Man to act contrary to the Dictates of " his own Mind." p. 9. *et alibi*.

This being once yielded, Sir, might it not have occurred to you that it rendered a great Part of your Pamphlet, and which, by the Title, may be taken for the Substance of it, to no Sort of Purpose whatever in the present Controversy ? *viz.* all that you say about the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, particularly in p. 4, 5, 6, &c. and from p. 23, to p. 29. as well as the Case you put in p. 12. This might likewise have prevented the Use of such Terms as, *Rebellion, Breach of Ordination Vows, the Constitution of the Church of Scotland perishing, &c.* Pray, Sir, what Sort of Obedience does the Constitution of the Church of Scotland, does our Ordination Vows induce or imply ? Do we refuse to submit ourselves to the Cognizance of Judicatories according to standing Rules ? as to our Life, Doctrine, Diligence, judicial Proceedings ? Do we oppose the making of References, Appeals or Complaints from a lower to a higher Judicatory ? or pretend that the Power of both is not authoritative, but merely consultative ? If we do not, lay your Hand upon your Heart, Sir, and tell me what has Presbyterian Subordination, what has Independentism to do in the present Question, and if the Insinuations of this Sort are any Thing else but what some Logicians have called *Argumentum Theologicum ab invidia ductum* ? If any Presbytery or Minister were claiming a Power to reverse a Sentence of the General Assembly, to hinder those who have Freedom from executing it, if they were not passively submitting to its taking Place, or were insisting on a right of positively doing any Thing in direct Contradiction to it, there might have been some Shadow of Pretence for appealing to the Constitution. But when no more Liberty is pleaded for than what yourself affirm is not in the Power of any Society under Heaven to take from us, no more than what must be allowed to the very lowest Slave of the most absolute Tyrant, when nothing but the Authority of God himself is preferred to theirs who are, in the most explicit Manner, acknowledged to be our earthly Superiors, nothing pretended to but merely a Right of *not doing* what appears to us to be a Sin, what Constitution, dear Sir, what Engagements can be in the least Degree, concerned in such Pretensions ?

But you think, " it will be found there is no other Part left " for

“for a Man of real Candour and Integrity to act than to withdraw from the Society,” when in any one Instance he cannot obey with a safe Conscience, p. 10. Sir, as this String is so much harped upon, I thought to have reserved it for a more particular Consideration. In the mean time, I would be glad to see your Answers to the following Questions.

1. To which of the Saints will you turn for an Example of such a Conduct? There are several Instances given in the preceding Pages of Men of real Candour and Integrity who scrupled Obedience to their earthly Rulers. But did any of them find that they had no other Part left for them to act, but to desert the Station which God had placed them in, and to withdraw from the Society they belonged to whether civil or ecclesiastic? Did our Saviour himself even think of this Expedient to give the Church no farther Trouble, after it had been frequently concluded by many Councils of the *Jewish* Church that he was an Impostor, and that all who owned him were to be excommunicated? Did not *Joseph of Arimathea* keep his Seat in their Councils, even after the enacting of such Regulations, and that without complying with them? Did the Apostles quietly retire and give the Sanhedrim no farther Trouble, when they were commanded not to speak at all, or teach in the Name of Jesus? Did *Athanasius* and the other orthodox Bishops in the 4th Century, even after they were actually deposed, Sir, or so many others who in the 5th Century could not in Conscience submit to the Regulations that were enacted by the supreme *Eutychian* Powers, both civil and ecclesiastic, did they silently withdraw, and leave their Oppressors to do as they pleased? Did our Forefathers in the last Century, did above two thousand Ministers of the greatest Candour and Integrity that ever *England* saw, did they voluntarily withdraw and give the Church no farther Trouble, when they could not comply with the Regulations that were then enacted? Does not Dr. *Calamy*, on the contrary, think it necessary for their Vindication to say, in his Abridgement of *Baxter's* Life, Chap. 9. “They did not throw themselves out of Service, but were forcibly ejected. They begg’d for Continuance with all imaginable Earnestness, and urged unanswerable Arguments in their Petitions; but were repulsed.”

2. What approved Writer upon Government do you find ever suggesting any such Expedient? Does *Grötlus*, or any of the Authors who so expressly teach Disobedience to Rulers in many Cases, ever hint the least Necessity of deserting our Station upon such Emergencies, or insist upon any Thing else, but *not doing* what appears to be a Sin?

3. How convenient soever such an expedient might prove for

the promoting of any Scheme that Rulers may happen to have in View, how could there ever, upon this Plan, be a stop put, or even the least check given, to a Course of the most manifest Defection in a Church? You know, Sir, at least you may know, that every Church on Earth is composed of such Materials, that especially in calm Weather, it has a strong Tendency to a State of Corruption. You cannot but know to what an astonishing Degree of Corruption the Christian Church did actually arrive in the Course of nine or ten Centuries, notwithstanding all the Struggles that were made by good Men to prevent it. But how much more speedily would that Course have been run, had every Man of real Candour and Integrity thought himself obliged to act the Part which you think is the only one left to him upon such Occasions? Had *Athanasius* and his Adherents thought of nothing but quitting the Stage, and resigning the Church to the will and pleasure of the *Arian* Emperors and their Councils, how could the Interest of Christ have been preserved? How could it ever have been recovered? I doubt not but you know how early the Popes got the highest Authority both civil and ecclesiastical to support their extravagant Pretensions. Had the Bishops of *Africa*, had the Bishops of *Gaul* in the 4th and 5th Centuries, made no Resistance to their ambitious Encroachments, but quietly, or rather cowardly yielded their Stations to more sawning Courtiers, how suddenly must the Man of Sin have been revealed? How suddenly exalted to the Throne of God himself, which he has at length, and so long presumed to usurp?

4. Is there no Regard, think you, upon such Occasions, due to the perishing Souls for whom Christ died? Suppose a Majority of worldly Men should ever get the Management of our General Assemblies, which altho' I do not ask you to grant is yet the Case, you will not refuse I believe, may possibly come to be the Case: Suppose in the Settlement of our Vacancies they should lay aside all Regard for the Edification of the People, and have nothing else in their View but merely the providing young Men with Annuities for Life: Suppose they should insist upon the Execution of their Deeds without minding how much it would lessen the Usefulness of any honest Servant of Christ and Souls that remained among them. Is not this a State which we possibly may come to in some future Period of Time? Consult the History of the Church, and you will not deny it. Suppose yourself at that Period in some useful Station, and fully convinced of the ruinous Tendency of the prevailing Measures, would you think it your own Duty, would you advise your faithful Brethren to whom God had committed the charge of a Part of his Flock, without waiting till you was thrust from them, to resign them entirely

ripely to grievous Wolves, as the Apostle calls them, not sparing the flock? Sir, you and I may perhaps have different Views of what Degrees of Corruption may at any one Time be actually threatening to infect the Church. But I suppose we will agree in this Test of the goodness of a general Argument, that if it will not hold upon all Suppositions, and in all the different States the Church can possibly be in, it must be rejected as faulty. This I take to be the Error that runs thro' all the reasonings on your Side of this Question. They would make some tolerable Shift perhaps upon one small Supposition; that the Church were always to continue in the same sound and happy State, which every Society is supposed to be in by those whose Measures at that Time prevail. But is this a Supposition that can be admitted, Sir? Or, will your Scheme equally suit a contrary Supposition?

5. What are the Measures that we chiefly object to in the present Government of this Church? And that we cannot in Conscience have an active Hand in? Is not this one of the very worst of them, that Ministers are thrust out of the Society for having some Regard to the great End of their Office, which is the Edification of the Body of Christ? How comes it then into your Head, that in any sort of Consistence with such Apprehension, we can be so very active and forward in this very Measure, as the officious forestalling you recommend would amount to? Especially as 'tis possible that the Society will not, in every Instance, incur the guilt of such a Measure, if the Inferior be not so hasty as to be *Felo de se*? A Command laid upon a Servant does not necessarily imply that the Master will rigorously insist upon it, notwithstanding any excuse that can be made, as a condition of continuing in his Service. Nor is it charitable in a Servant who thinks his excuse a good one, to presume that any reasonable Master will do so, till it appears in Fact, that he actually does carry the Matter that length. And when once he has formally pronounced the Sentence, 'tis his own, and not the Servant's Deed. Are we to proceed upon a Supposition, that would, in our Apprehension, be so uncharitable, as that the Church, merely for supporting her own Authority, will make the breach of her standing Laws an unrelenting Term of ministerial Communion?

6. How far would you have us to withdraw from the Society? If we are to take our Measures from the Principles that seem to actuate the conduct of our late Managers, who have oftener than once excluded from the Participation of those Sacraments which Christ instituted for all his own Members, however differing from one another in Nonessentials, the very holiest Saint who could not apply to or ask a Certificate from his Parish Minister (if you can suppose such a Scruple consistent with being a Saint) we have

no Reason to doubt, and are confirmed herein by a Hint in your last Paragraph, that you would have us to sacrifice *Christian* as well as *Ministerial* Communion in the Cause. But however it might suit the Convenience, Sir, and tend to the Ease of some who would thereby get rid of a troublesome Opposition, and meet with less Controul, perhaps, in the Disposal of a few *sine cure* Annuities, we have a greater Regard for the Body of Christ than to rend and split it into Pieces by any active, far less unnecessary Deed of our own. A Schism in the Christian Church is a Matter of deeper Concern to us, whatever it may be to you, Sir, than lightly to make it for every wrong Step of its Rulers. If they will not keep Communion with us unless we think every Thing lawful which they think lawful, this is what we cannot help: Let them be charged with the Guilt and Consequences of the Schism. For our Part we dare not break Communion with them for not thinking every Thing sinful which we think sinful. And as we challenge you to produce an Instance of a Society's being dissolved, thro' the Condescendence of the Rulers to a conscientious Scruple of their Inferiors: So we can give you a recent Example that no Society can be kept together upon your Principles. It is of those very Seceders whose Example you recommend to our Imitation. Their fundamental Maxim is the same with yours, that no Communion is to be kept with those who differ from us: And you see what work it has already made amongst themselves. Indeed, without pretending to the Spirit of Prophecy, I will take upon me to foretel you, that it cannot fail to divide and crumble into Pieces every Society where its Influence is suffered to prevail.

But perhaps you would have us to keep Christian Communion with you, till you are pleased to cast us out, and in the mean Time only to lay down our ministerial charges, and lay up our Talent in a Napkin or hide it in the Earth. Sir, if you be a Minister, I am sorry that you have so slight a Sense of the Obligations you were thereby brought under to God and the Church, that without any necessity, without any Sentence of either civil or ecclesiastical Superiors, you would voluntarily desert the service of your glorious Master, for no other Reason but because you differ in Opinion from some other of the Servants, and that in a Case where 'tis supposed they are not thrusting you out, and the People are demanding your Service; that you would chuse of your own accord to act a Part which our Brethren in *England*, and our Fathers in *Scotland* durst not do even after the Authority of both Church and State was interposed for it. Dr. *Calamy* tells us with relation to the first. "They were much persuaded to lay down their Ministry, when they were denied the Liberty of exercising it publicly; but the generality of them
" could

" could not be satisfied upon many Accounts. They feared the
 " guilt of perfidious-breaking their *Ordination Vow*, by which
 " they obliged themselves to the diligent Performance of their
 " Ministry. They were afraid of the Sin of *Sacrilege* in alie-
 " nating Persons who were consecrated to God. It had to them
 " a very strange Appearance, that their Brethren should so much
 " aggravate the *Sacrilege* of alienating consecrated Utensils and
 " Lands, when they at the same Time were so forward to alie-
 " nate consecrated Persons, and discovered such an Approbation
 " of it: Whereas, in their Apprehension, the Lands and Goods
 " were but to serve the Persons who were employed in the divine
 " Service. Many of their People claimed the Continuance of
 " their Relation and Ministry, and having given up themselves
 " to their conduct in divine Things, begged they would not de-
 " fert them.----The Curse and Doom of the unprofitable Servant
 " that hid his Talent, *Mat.* 25. much affected them, and they
 " could not bear the thoughts of exposing themselves to a like
 " treatment.----They were withall affected with many Passages
 " of sacred Scripture; some of which intimate the Duration of
 " the ministerial Office, where there is once a Conveyance:
 " *Mat.* v. 13, 14, &c. *Mat.* xxviii. 19, 20. *Eph.* iv. 10, &c.
 " *1 Tim.* iv. 15, 16. *Mat.* xxiv. 45, 46, 48. and others of them
 " plead for the Necessity of Preaching, even when the Magistrate
 " forbids: as *Acts* iv. 19. v. 28. *1 Cor.* ix. 14, 16. *Acts* iv. 29.
 " *2 Tim.* iv. 1, 2. *1 Tim.* vi. 13, 14. &c. — They could not
 " see whence either civil Magistrates or Bishops had any Power
 " to Doom them to utter Silence, so long as they could not
 " prove upon them, either Apostacy, Heresy, or Perfidiousness,
 " or any Thing inconsistent with the public Peace, &c." The
 whole Passage which I have curtailed for Brevity-sake, I recom-
 mend to your Perusal†; and shall only add that the Method
 which now prevails in the Settlement of Vacancies, and the Pro-
 spect of the Consequences in which the Parishes so vacated, and
 perhaps some of the neighbouring Ministers and Congregations
 as well as the Church in general might be thereby involved, af-
 ford us no Temptations to have an active Hand in any Thing
 that threatens to produce them.

7. If you are in earnest in recommending this Advice to us,
 (and if otherwise, the Joke is scarcely worth the publishing, after
 it is so threed-bare) let me ask you seriously, Whether our actual
 complying with it would really tend to promote the Purpose
 which is not dissembled on your Side? the only Reason that ever
 was pretended, I believe, to be given for disabling any Number

of.

† Abridgement of Baxter's Life, Ch. 10.

of Ministers under 5 to proceed in the Settlement of *Inverkeithing* was to lessen the popular Odium which the Actors laid their Account with, by dividing the Burden among a greater Number. And, I dare say, you would not chuse to put such a Hardship upon your Brethren, if doing the Jobb was as creditable as restraining from it. Now, Pray Sir, if you would condescend to be serious for a Moment, whether think you it would have saved the Popularity of the three Brethren who had Freedom to execute the Sentence, if all the Recusants had reduced themselves to the same Situation which the Assembly has brought Mr. *Gillespie* into? If the greatest Part of the pastoral Charges in a Presbytery should, upon every such Occasion, be laid desolate, would this mend the Matter, think you, one whit? How would you take it in a Servant of Reputation among your Neighbours, if, upon your requiring his Assistance in a most unpopular Affair, instead of declining it in the quietest and most prudent Manner, while he continued to do the rest of your Business as usual; he should, on the contrary, alarm the whole neighbourhood by such a *Coup d'eclat*, as throwing up your Service at once in the middle of a term, and thereby representing you to the outmost of his Power as a base unworthy fellow whom he could not live under the same Roof with, as well as leaving your Family and Business in the greatest Disorder and Confusion?

Lastly, Is there no Regard at all, think you, due to the Subsistence of ourselves and our Families? Very little indeed there must be supposed to be in one that would unnecessarily deprive them of their very Bread, by inflicting upon himself, for what he thought no Crime, a Punishment so excessively severe, that even one who was conscious to himself of having deserved some Chastisement, would be excused by every Person of any Bowels, tho' he applied for a Mitigation of it. I say, Sir, inflicting it upon himself, while it is supposed that his Superiors are not making his Obedience a necessary Term of continuing in his Station. For when once they do so, we have no Hesitation in our Choice. Till then, the Part left for a Man of real Candour and Integrity to act, is merely negative, while he is willing to run the Risk of being either deposed, as Mr. *Gillespie*, or suspended as some of his Neighbours, or rebuked as the Presbytery of *Linlithgow*, or excused as other Presbyteries have been by wise Assemblies in former Times, who were not driven by *Jebu's*.

I have been the longer upon this as you have given me an Opportunity to compleat the Argument contained in the preceeding Sheets, in so far as it is general. And as the rest of your Pamphlet will fall in my Way, in discussing the other Things proposed

posed p. 14. I promise you, in Case of another Conference, that *Andropodius* will not fail to do all Justice to any Thing that you have offered on the remaining Heads. And till then the following Remarks may suffice.

As you cannot but know that we refuse Obedience in no Case but what appears to us to be sinful, you might have spared all that you have said upon any other Supposition in p. 7, 8, and 9. And thus having considered your Opinion on the Part of Inferiors, I proceed to what you have suggested in defence of our Superiors.

The Question is not, as you alledge, p. 10. "Who are the Judges, whether it is expedient to grant this Indulgence or not?" If the Parliament had laid a Tax of 16 Shillings in the Pound upon Land, their Advocate in a Dispute upon that Subject would be thought to have made but a poor Defence for them, if he had nothing else to say but that it was they, not we that were the proper Judges. If there is any Dispute at all upon the Subject, the Question undoubtedly must be, whether they have judged right or not? And this Question cannot be determined by putting a very different Case as you do, p. 11. in which Indulgence would not be right, nor by the Consequences of giving Indulgence in every Case, but (unless you'll say that Indulgence is never to be given in any Case) by applying the proper Rules of judging to the precise Case in Hand. The Rules of judging that we appeal to are Scripture, Reason, and the standing Laws of this Church. These (as you may perhaps sometime or other be made sensible) afford abundant Topicks from whence it may be shown (not that the last Assembly was not the proper Judge: If you have a Mind to make this the Question, you have no Opponents that I know of: But) that they judged wrong. And that this may still be a Question (not indeed to be practically decided, but) to be speculatively argued, even after the other is yielded, will not be denied, I hope, by any Man who has subscribed his assent to this Truth, that "All Synods and Councils, since the Apostle's Times, may err, and many have erred." As to the two first Rules of judging, viz. Scripture, and Reason, none of our Arguments from thence are touched by you, and so no Opportunity is afforded of supporting or illustrating them. And as to the last which your Defences are confined to, if, in your own account of our Constitution, the Assembly is not the whole of our legislative Power, how can they, Sir, but be limited in the exercise of their executive Power? Supreme, I acknowledge it is: But to assert as you do p. 5. that it is unlimited, is an express Contradiction to your own account. For what signifies a legislative Power, when the executive is not limited thereby?

I appeal to your own account, whether our standing Laws do not expressly require, that no Minister shall be intruded into any Parish contrary to the will of the Congregation? (That the Word Intrusion has been sometimes used in another Sense is so insignificant an Observation that you might have saved the Printer and your Readers the whole Page you have upon this Subject) I do not for my own Part, Sir, insist for any Power of Election in the People. All that I am now at least to insist upon is, that to depose a Minister for refusing to ordain one against the Will of the Congregation is directly flying in the Face of many standing Laws of the whole Christian Church for 5 or 600 Years after there was any Christianity in the World. This, if you know any Thing of Christian Antiquity, you know to be an indisputable Fact. You must know likewise, if you know any Thing of these Matters, that this was a Branch of our Reformation from Popery, and that the Church of *Scotland* particularly, (which in this as in other Instances, has had the happiness of a farther Reformation than some of her Neighbours) by a continued and uninterrupted Series of standing Acts, has this Point of Reformation secured to her as far as her legislative Power can go. And a very little Reflection, Sir, will likewise convince you, that an utter neglect of this, in the Nature of Things, must be, and in Fact is accompanied with the utter ruin of practical Religion and serious Godliness.

What a pitiful Reply is it that you make to all this, Sir, and how does it manifest the Distress of your Cause when you alledge that our Acts "do not specify exactly how great the Concurrency should be? Or whether the consent of the Majority of "the Congregation be necessary before the Church proceed to "the Settlement." P. 13. and 17. Alas! Sir, the Majority is long ago out of the Question. In the Instances for which Presbyteries have been harassed the Point was beyond all Possibility of Dispute. For if you know not whether one or ninety nine in the Hundred, (or call it two, Sir, if you please) be the Congregation, we must have a new Language to be understood.

But as we are not now speaking of an Election, but of the consent or dissent of the Parish, I do not under the Word Parish include Heritors who are no Members of the Congregation. It does not, in my Apprehension, in the least Degree alter the Nature of Oppression whether it is committed by one Patron or 100 Non-residing Heritors. You know that, in the Case of *Inverkeithing*, Election was out of the Question, the Patron being the only legal Elector, and the consent of the *Parish* being the only Thing that remained to be enquired after. And even with respect to Election, I know not how you come to call such, *legal Voters*.

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The Act of Parliament 1690 you know is repealed in so far as it makes them Electors. The Act of Assembly 1732, you know, never was a legal Deed of this Church, and was in 1734 laid aside, not only as being unconstitutionally enacted, but as being found hurtful. So that the only ecclesiastic Rule about Election that stands unrepealed is the Act 1649, which gives the Power of Election to the Elders. And whether Mr. *Richardson* had these only legal Electors for him, I presume, I need not inform you.

There is one other evasion you have recourse to, namely, that in some of our Acts mention is made of the People's offering Objections, which may be found to be but causeless Prejudices. To which I reply, that the Presbytery is impowered indeed to judge upon the whole matter, the Election, the Opposition and the Grounds of it. And some such general Expression is all that is any where said on supposition of an Election opposed by the People. Does this necessarily imply, that, if the Opposition appears to be so universal, and so deeply rooted, that there is little Prospect of the Settlements being for Edification, and that it will rather raise a flame in the whole Neighbourhood, the Presbytery is tied down, to admit the elected at any rate? Or, is there any Thing said upon that Head so plain, so express, and so frequent, as what we have to the contrary, that no Violence is to be done to the Inclinations of the People. Compare the Expressions on both Sides together, and imagine them consistent, and there will be no difficulty in the Matter.

On this Occasion I must observe to you, that you take a Thing for granted that will not be so readily yielded, as if no sufficient Objection could arise from the acceptance of the Presentee. Can there be a stronger Objection against a Man's being qualified for being Minister of any Parish than his discovering a want of concern for the Edification of that People? What else was it, Sir, that made the Assembly 1638 appoint such to be repelled as *res ambiguus*? To accept a Presentation, and insist upon it, not only without advice of the Presbytery of the Bounds, but when the Presbytery, and all the World is convinced, that it must scatter that Congregation, and distress the true Interest of Religion in that Part of the Church, is this, Sir, no Colour of an Objection? — The Law is so far from laying any Man under a necessity to do so, that our Friends who procured the Law you allude to, 'tis well known, intended it as a favour, which they took for granted, would deliver us from all Embarrassment. Upon what pretence, Dear Sir, can you say, that "at any rate it was not in his Power, nor in the Power of the Church, to remedy the Matter." The Assembly 1638 would have found it in their Power, Sir, and in all probability would have found the Censurer,

which they had Power to inflict (a Power given them for Edification, and not for Destruction) better bestowed on the one Side, than the last Assembly found them on the other, and would perhaps have found another Application of your Maxim, "That it is better to cut off one Member, than that the whole Body should Perish."

The Constitution of every Society that can boast of any legal Constitution at all, or that has the least Grain of true Liberty in it that renders it worth the supporting, essentially implies, that the executive Power must be limited by the legislative. If it be not, the legislative Power is good for nothing, is absolutely annihilated. Judge by this, Sir, to whom the high Words you so liberally deal in, of *overthrowing our Constitution* do most justly belong? To them who run the risk of losing their very Bread for adhering to an uninterrupted Series of our standing Acts and Constitutions? Or to them who, in their executive Capacity, take upon them to dispense therewith, and depose their Brethren for no other Reason, but because they cannot think themselves at Liberty to do so likewise? Whether was it the late King *James*, who, in his executive Capacity, presumed to dispense with the Laws, or those Subjects who ventured to resist, or as you call it, rebel against this Encroachment, that were the Overthrowers of the Constitution?

As for the Act of Parliament whereby you would have us to imagine we are tied down: If an Act of Parliament really did (as I think it does not) require us to scatter and divide the Flock of Christ, over which he has made us Overseers, and with our own Hands to destroy that practical Religion which 'tis our Business to promote, and that under the severest Penalties which they have in their Power to inflict; I have shown, and you have yielded that this is what no Society under Heaven have in their Power to force us to. The late glorious Deliverer of *Britain*, when he was Prince of *Orange*, knew of a Way never to see his Country lost, and that was to die in the last Ditch. But the Truth is, Sir, we may perhaps have Reason to complain of our Judges; but we have not half the reason to complain of the Law that you would insinuate. For my Part I esteem it comparatively a Matter of small Moment, whether one Patron or a dozen Heritors, have the Right of nominating the Person that is to fill a Vacancy, if that right were exercised, or if the Law concerning it were executed, by Persons who had a proper Concern for the only End there can be in providing any Parish with a Minister at all. The Act of Parliament 1712 does nothing else besides putting the Patron in the Place of Heritors and Elders. It repeals the Act 1690 only "in so far as the same relates to
" the

“the Presentation of Ministers by Heritors and others therein mentioned.” It not only ratifies the other Clauses of the Act 1690, but expressly statutes that “the qualified Person or Persons, Minister or Ministers, that shall be presented by the respective Patrons shall be received and admitted by the Presbytery of the Bounds, *N. B.* in the same Manner as the Persons or Ministers presented before the making of this Act ought to have been admitted.” Now what is the Manner in which Ministers, before the making of this Act ought to have been admitted? The Act 1690 appoints the Electors only “to name and propose the Person to the whole Congregation, to be either approved or disapproved by them; and if they disapprove, that the Disapprovers give in their Reasons, to the Effect the Affair may be cognosed upon by the Presbytery of the Bounds, *N. B.* at whose Judgment, and by whose Determination, the calling and Entry of a particular Minister is to be ordered and *N. B.* concluded.”

Now let the Execution of these Acts be but in proper Hands, and I would not be afraid of the Consequence. Let them but have some View to that which the Parliament expressly shows they had in their Eye. Let them in the Interpretation of the act of Parliament consult the very Light of Nature, let them remember that 'tis not the Presentation of an idle Man to an Annuity, but of a Pastor to have the Charge of Souls that the Parliament means, let them consult the Christian Laws both civil and ecclesiastical, from the beginning of our Religion, down to the Times when Christianity itself was lost in the Corruptions of Popery, let them have a Regard to the Sense of this Church ever since the Reformation; nay, let them but advert to the plain Meaning of the Parliaments own Words; and 'tis impossible they can be *straitened*, Sir, if they do not wantonly and officiously straiten themselves. And what is the Strait which, at the worst, and according to the most unfavourable Interpretation (which Laws allowed to be hard are never thought subject to) we must be reduced to? Only to delay a little the Settlement of a Parish, till we see what Alterations Providence may bring about, instead of unsettling at once both it, and perhaps other Parishes in the Neighbourhood, and driving our People by Shoals into the Secession, which, if not supported, would soon sink by the Weight of their own Principles and Conduct. And what should hinder an Assembly, whose Authority is now made so irresistible, to try the Strength of it, in the Straits which you represent them in, upon that Part of their Subjects, who have, upon this Occasion, made the loudest Cry for Obedience to all their Regulations, whether approved or disapproved by themselves? I mean, in the first Place,

Place, *Presentees*. How they might be dealt with, you yourself have suggested, p. 21. from the Assembly 1638. And in the second Place, *Patrons*, who, if they be Members of this Church, and have joined in the Cry of Obedience, may have their Sincerity put to the Trial, by relieving the Church out of her Straits, and acting the Part of sincere Christians, or even of fair, candid, and honest Men, I shall not say at the Command, but at the earnest Prayers and Entreaties of their supreme ecclesiastic Superiors, which, I am sure, it would not be unworthy of them to interpose sometimes, instead of straining all their Authority upon scrupulous Consciences, to execute the Mischief that Patrons employ them in.

There is one Thing which, for your own Sake, I wish you had suppressed, and that is your uncharitable Accusations of others upon hear-say Stories, p. 22. and 23. To which we may possibly add a Piece of private History with which you conclude your Performance. - As I never heard of the last till I saw your Pamphlet; so I have since heard it contradicted. And whatever be in it, allow me to put you in mind, that Christian Charity requires you to have better Evidence than you pretend to have, for all the Facts at least that you relate, before you publish any Thing that, even in your own Apprehension, reflects upon the Character of your Neighbour. As to the vague Accusations in p. 22. and 23. I can only say for my own Share, that those of my Acquaintance who have the greatest Aversion at violent Settlements, and for that very Reason, Sir, are usually most in Earnest to procure the Peoples Consent to a Presentee, and are willing to try all Methods to obtain a comfortable Settlement, except it be the cramming him down their Throats after they have declared their Aversion in the most publick and explicate Manner.

You have filled your Performance with so many Questions on our Side of the Question, for which I have only to give you Thanks, that I can think of little else in it that needs any Reply. As for the kind Hint you give p. 35. that the next Assembly ought not to make the least Abatement of the late Rigour without proper Acknowledgements, I would gladly know, Sir, what Acknowledgements can be made, upon your own Principles? Would you have Mr. Gillespie to say, that he ought to have done what you so expressly allow p. 9. without all Doubt he ought not to have done? You have told us, p. 1. what I was glad to find come from your Side of the House, and which I took for a good Symptom of Reconciliation, that "common Charity as well as the Rules of the Gospel should teach us to forbear one another; not to condemn our Brother, tho' he differ from us, as we are bound to think he acts according to his Light and Judgment."

"ment." Mr. Gillespie has been condemned, severely in Comparison with the Condemnation you speak of, rigorously condemned, for no other Reason but because agreeing with many of his Brethren, he happened to differ from some others of them: And will you who own yourself bound to think he acts according to his Light and Judgment, be for continuing that Condemnation, unless he acts contrary to his Light and Judgment? Remember what all Writers upon *Restitution* agree in, that he who detains what his Neighbour was unjustly deprived of, is as guilty as he who took it from him.

But it seems the present Exercise of his Ministry is (tho' not in his own Opinion, I dare say, however you impute this to him, yet in yours) inconsistent with a Re-union. Whether you would insinuate that the Exercise of it in a House, which I am told is convenient for the Parish of *Carnock*, rather than in the Church or in the Fields, is any Aggravation of this Crime, I really cannot pretend to guess. But to the Objection, as far as I understand it, I have those two Things to reply.

1. Mr. Gillespie has Reason to think that, in the present Exercise of his Ministry, he is not counteracting the Intention of the last Assembly. I believe no Body will refuse, that if the keenest of his Persecutors could have taken a Years Stipend from him by any other ecclesiastical Deed than Deposition, they would not have proceeded any farther for a Crime that has been often excused, and never before was censured any higher than by a very gentle Rebuke. And accordingly, tho' the Sentence was pronounced in the Name of Christ, yet do they not prohibit the Exercise of his Ministry in the Church of Christ, but only in *this* Church, which was taken for a Limitation of the Effects of it to the Benefits of the Establishment. But the Assembly itself is the best Interpreter of its own Meaning. And if they intended to carry the Matter any farther, they, at least, refused to say so. For being formally asked, Whether they meant to silence him altogether, they would not say they did. If Mr. Gillespie then has mistaken their Meaning, they themselves have led him into that Mistake, and, at the worst, his Practice is intitled to the candid Allowance of having proceeded from a Mistake, which was not without a colourable Ground. But I must add,

2. That as you carry the Matter farther than even the last Assembly chose to do: So, in making such an Objection, you betray a very great Ignorance of the History and constant Practice of the Christian Church. There has always been a very great Distinction made between a Deposition in the Case of a Division among Ministers, especially when it was only in Relation to a Difference of Sentiments about Matters of external Order, and a Deposition upon Grounds that were allowed on all Hands to be relevant. In the first Case, Sir, it has been the constant and uniform Practice of all, whether Catholics or Schismatics, to continue in the Exercise of their Ministry after they were deposed by the prevailing Party. Witness the Orthodox in antient Times that were deposed by *Arian*, *Eutychian*, &c. Councils. Witness the *Novatians*, the *Donatists*, and other Schismatics. And whenever a Reconciliation was brought about, this was never considered as any Impediment of Union. To insist upon a Renunciation of their Principles, or to make an Objection of the Exercise of their Ministry would have been neither more nor less than a Declaration for a Continuance of the Division. I might likewise put you in Mind of the Nonconformists in *England*, as appears from Dr. *Calamy* above, of the Presbyterians in *Scotland*, not only those that were ejected after the Restoration, but those that were deposed after the Differences between the Protesters and the public Resolutions were settled in 1733. Tho' they disobeyed the Authority than Mr. Gillespie submitted as far as he understood fit to explain it) yet did it

all the Seceders that were deposed, of contempt of the Assembly (who has most punctually submitted to their Meaning, or as they thought fit to interpret that was afterwards made)